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GENERAL AUGUSTO CESAR SANDINO, for nearly six years a rebel against marine rule in Nicaragua, characterized as an unprincipled "bandit" by marine officers and the United States government, has made his peace with President Juan Bautista Sacasa. The terrible bandit flew into Managua, embraced a member of the National Guard, spoke soft words of brotherly love, declared he bore no enmity toward the American people, and did not even demand a post in the new government. He sounded more like Gandhi than a fire-eating chieftain from the wilds. The marines who unsuccessfully struggled through fever swamps and lofty cordilleras to destroy him must be a trifle chagrined at the manner in which he flew peacefully into the hand of authority as soon as they had left. Were it not for its tragic antecedents, this outcome would appear almost comic. Sandino is reinforced as the hero of a continent and a half, and will doubtless have a few more streets and plazas named after him in Latin America. For a figure in the public eye of that part of the world, he has shown remarkable consistency. When *The Nation's* correspondent took his life in his hands to interview him in 1928 at the height of the marines' campaign against him, Sandino promised—as was recorded in the columns of this weekly—that if the marines were withdrawn, he would lay down his arms and accept no public office in return. He has faithfully carried out those promises, and had General Feland accepted Sandino's pronouncements at that time, the country would have been saved five years of bloodshed and the present evidence that the activities of the marines were largely futile.

SANDINO HAS ASKED for lands for his soldiers, further carrying out his 1928 statement that when the marines finally left, his men only wanted a chance to work honestly. The Nueva Segovia region where they will settle is for the most part an untamed frontier. It will require relentless effort to bring such mountainous jungle country under cultivation. As for Sandino, it is hardly likely that a man with such courage and such popularity will fail to play an important part in the future destiny of his country. The United States has had to eat humble pie a number of times in connection with Nicaraguan affairs. After opposing Moncada, dumping his ammunition into the swamps, and harassing his operations in every way possible, Washington was obliged to stage an election to enable him to become President. After calling Sacasa a Bolshevik and denouncing him as a puppet of Mexico, we were obliged to receive him as ambassador to Washington and then to recognize him as President. It will be still more amusing if some future Stimson has to stretch his legs under the same conference table with Sandino. Let our government's experience in Nicaragua be a lesson to us.

FRANKLIN D. ROOSEVELT has promised to keep Congress informed of the progress of his war-debt negotiations with Great Britain. This was the sensible thing to do. However, it is important to note that Mr. Roosevelt's statement was prompted by recent speeches of Senators Lewis of Illinois and Reed of Pennsylvania. The two Senators intimated that if Mr. Roosevelt follows the precedent set by Woodrow Wilson and keeps Congress in the dark with regard to negotiations with foreign countries, the agreements eventually arrived at may meet the fate of the Versailles treaty. It needs to be pointed out that the present situation is not comparable to that which President Wilson had to face. Then the President was forced to deal with a hostile Congress; Mr. Roosevelt's party has an overwhelming majority in both houses. Ratification of the peace treaty could be and was blocked by a one-third minority in the Senate; the debt negotiations, which require only a simple majority vote of the two houses, cannot be blocked by a minority. If Mr. Roosevelt is at all successful as a party leader, he should have no difficulty in finding a Congressional majority. We believe strongly that Congress and the public should be kept informed at all times concerning the progress of the debt negotiations, but we also believe that Mr. Roosevelt would be making a fatal mistake if he were to allow himself to be influenced by the unsupported threats of the new irreconcilables in Congress. He is in an excellent position to assert his leadership boldly and firmly, to win Congress over from its present isolationist attitude. This should be his chief purpose in taking Congress into his confidence during the debt negotiations.

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MANY PEOPLE are discussing the possibility of a revolutionary crisis resulting from the rebellion now sweeping the farm States. This appears to be extremely far-fetched, though it must be conceded that several elements necessary to the development of a revolutionary crisis are to be found in the unrest of the farmers. Their organized defiance of the constituted authorities is particularly significant. In many communities the farmers have taken the law into their own hands; in other communities they have adopted a decidedly indifferent attitude toward law and government. Defiance of the law and apathy toward government, as history shows, are two of the conditions which invariably precede revolution. Whatever the farm rebellion may portend, it is being taken with justifiable seriousness by State officials and mortgage-holders. The legislatures of a dozen States are considering radical measures to reduce the indebtedness and interest burden of the farmers and to place agriculture on a sound economic basis. Some of these measures are themselves revolutionary in that they would employ the power of the State to interfere with private contracts. The insurance companies, which hold 20 per cent of the farm mortgages in the country, have responded by declaring a general moratorium on such loans. This, however, leaves mortgages worth $7,000,000,000 or more in the hands of local banks and individuals. A general default on these obligations would greatly aggravate the situation. President-elect Roosevelt and the Democrats in Congress are exceedingly wise in placing the farm problem at the top of the list of jobs to be tackled early in the new Administration.

THE RECENT CONVICTION of Angelo Herndon in Georgia appears at first glance to have been as fantastic as it was cruel and partisan. Herndon was sentenced to spend from eighteen to twenty years in prison. The charge against him was incitement to rebellion and the statute on which the indictment was based was written before the Civil War—to provide against uprisings of slaves—and was revived after the war in the struggles that marked the reconstruction era. It has not been invoked from that troubled time until this; but as the result of its recent resurrection a Negro boy of nineteen faces half a life in a Georgia chain gang, and six others—men and women, black and white—are awaiting trial on similar charges. Herndon, a Negro and a Communist, was defended by Negro counsel before a white judge and jury. Those facts taken together were sufficient to insure the verdict. But it is idle to argue now whether or not his chances would have been better if his counsel had been white. Perhaps they would; but under any circumstances the trial would equally have been a dramatic example of class and race justice. Perhaps the old statute served as well as would any newfangled criminal-syndicalist law to express the facts of the situation. The judge and jury were not interested in the contentions of the defense: that Herndon had been arrested on the basis of radical literature which had been seized in his room without a warrant; that the barring of Negroes from the jury rendered a fair trial impossible; that the Communist Party is a legal political organization in Georgia. Putting constitutional rights aside, they concentrated on what after all was the real issue: a Negro Communist had come into the State of Georgia and had helped to organize and arouse the unemployed workers of both races. Herndon was on trial as a menace to the dominant class and race. And this, in a modest degree, he was. The law was on his side. But what is law in the face of class and race fear?

IT IS PROBABLE that whatever action New York State takes in balancing its budget will be closely followed and perhaps imitated in many other States. It is therefore doubly unfortunate that Governor Lehman included a proposal for a tax of ¾ of 1 per cent on retail sales in his first annual budget message. Such a tax has all the objectionable features that a federal sales tax would have, and raises special administrative difficulties. Nor are the Governor's income-tax recommendations free from objections. It is logical that he should follow the new federal law in lowering the exemptions for a single person from $2,500 to $1,000 and for a married person from $4,000 to $2,500. But he proposes further that all persons with taxable incomes should pay in addition to their regular tax a flat rate of 1 per cent on their entire income with no personal exemptions allowed. This last provision is quite unjustifiable. If, instead, a rate of 2 or 3 per cent were levied on incomes in the higher brackets (in addition to the present graduated tax rising to 6 per cent) it would be unnecessary to disallow personal exemptions. The increase in the gasoline tax to 4 cents, while regrettable, is sound; and the Governor is to be especially commended for his proposal that no deductions shall be permitted for capital losses. If the same rule had been followed in fixing the new federal income tax, the revenues from that tax would increase enormously.

IT IS TIME WE STOPPED expecting a recovery in business for the wrong reasons, particularly when the reasons are precisely those that have so signally failed to prove effective in the last three years. Mr. Loree, president of the Delaware and Hudson Railroad, made the front pages by predicting a recovery in business this year on the ground that the railroads "have put off renewals for plant and equipment for at least two years" and "that by the middle of next summer extensive renewal of equipment will have to be made—and I think that holds true of industry generally as it does of the railroads." Mr. Loree, in other words, tells us that the railroads need equipment, which nobody doubts, but does not tell us where the purchasing power is to come from. In the first year or so of the depression it was constantly argued that the up-turn would begin when people could no longer put off buying new overcoats, new automobiles, and so forth; but the event has proved that the millions on shrunken incomes or totally without employment do put off these purchases. The renewal of capital equipment no less than the purchase of new consumers' goods comes from those who have the purchasing power and not from those who have merely the need. How long will it take us to learn this first principle—to stop looking for "automatic" recovery by "natural" processes while neglecting the fundamental maladjustments that only political action can correct?

THE COMMITTEE OF NINETEEN by agreeing to recommend that members of the League of Nations refuse recognition to Manchukuo injected a note of firmness into Geneva's attitude toward Japan just when it was degenerating into complete futility. It is further announced that the committee will report that a settlement of the Manchurian question must be based upon the recommendations of the Lytton report. To be sure, the report of the committee has not been committed to cold print, and even if the final draft submitted to the Assembly is as firm as it ought to be, the Assembly debate will doubtless dull its sharpest points. But the

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gesture has already had some effect on Japan. The same Yosuke Matsuoka who was threatening world war on Saturday was on Monday circulating reports that the League's conciliation draft might be accepted by Japan even though it bars recognition of Manchukuo. It is true, moreover, that the Committee of Nineteen made bold to talk back to Tokio only after Sir Eric Drummond had made it clear that they could do so without committing themselves to the application of sanctions. Whatever the reason, it is to be hoped that Geneva will have the courage to follow up this first step in developing a firm stand against Japan's threat to world peace.

THE PRUSSIAN DIET has been dissolved and the last fragment of Prussian state autonomy wiped out as the result of a presidential decree replacing Otto Braun, the Socialist Premier, with Vice-Chancellor von Papen, who cast a controlling vote in the Cabinet overriding the decision of the Diet against simultaneous elections with the Reich. At the same time press restrictions of unprecedented severity were announced in another presidential decree. In addition to the regulations now in effect it lists as offenses any "incitement to general strike or a strike involving a vital industry," and the dissemination of "deliberately false news" whose publication would be likely to "jeopardize the interests of the state." This last clause can obviously be used to suppress any opposition newspaper. Public meetings may be forbidden if they are regarded as "dangerous to the public order," or dissolved by the police if speakers make remarks which, if they appeared in a newspaper, would result in its suppression under the new law. Hitler now controls all the organized avenues of communication with the German people, including the government radio and the movies. Nazi gangs freely break up even informal groups of Socialists and Communists, and murder and assaults continue unchecked. The Communist Party expects to be outlawed before the elections in March. Germany is under worse than martial law; it is under mob law supported by all the powers of a reactionary centralized authority.

CONGRESSMEN are prepared to talk economy until they are blue in the face—so long as the contemplated economies do not affect their own pocket-books. They can lop off the appropriation for such bureaus as the Federal Trade Commission without a qualm, but let anyone suggest that they cut their own salaries and they will rise almost as one man to condemn the idea. On February 4 the House of Representatives voted down amendment after amendment to the legislative appropriation bill which would have reduced Congressional salaries from the present rate of $10,000 per annum to $7,500 or $5,000. The opposition, which included all but a few Southern Democrats, contended that the amount involved—$1,327,500 in the first case, or $2,655,000 in the second—was so small that it was not worth while writing it into the budget. Presumably the huge appropriation for the Veterans' Bureau was so large that it was not worth bothering about. In any case, just the day before they considered their own salaries the members of the House wasted many hours debating items involving only a few thousand dollars and passed without a record vote and without slicing off a single cent the $956,800,000 appropriation for the veterans. There must be economy, of course. The Democratic Party, which already controls the lower House, has promised to cut expenditures at least 25 per cent. Where do they propose to begin?

TWO WEEKS AGO we remarked editorially that it was still too soon to state definitely whether or not the determination of certain New York theatrical managers to reduce their prices would justify itself economically. We are glad now to be able to say that two meritorious productions which were about to close enjoyed such an increase in gross receipts as a result of the new scale that both have indefinitely prolonged their engagements. During the month of January business tended to improve all along Broadway, but that means only that about half the theaters are lighted and that about half of those enjoyed capacity business even on Saturday night. Meanwhile the Paramount-Publix Corporation—which controls the largest group of moving-picture theaters in America or the world at large—has gone into the hands of a receiver. That means, in effect, one more business which the government is not going to keep out of.

John Galsworthy

DURING the course of his sixty-five years John Galsworthy enjoyed most of the possible rewards of a literary career—critical esteem, great popularity, considerable financial profit, and the Nobel Prize. Writing must, besides, have come fairly easily to a man who published at least forty volumes, and "The Forsyte Saga" shared with Maugham's "Of Human Bondage" the honor of being one of the two novels usually chosen to head lists of the "ten best" of our generation. And yet Galsworthy also paid one of the penalties of a long literary career: he outlived his generation to the extent, at least, that the worship of new heroes detracted somewhat from the fame which had once been his. Plays like "Justice" and "Strife" had definitely receded into the past; even "The Forsyte Saga" was less and less often cited as the most significant work of fiction written in the twentieth century.

The form of his novels had something to do with the fact that the more "advanced" critics sometimes professed to be bored by them. They were regular, systematic, explicit, and carefully rounded. Thackeray or George Eliot would have understood their method, and, indeed, Galsworthy may some day be classed as the last of the great Victorian novelists in the sense that he was the last to cultivate the Victorian form. But there was also in his attitude and spirit something too judicious, tolerant, and conciliatory to please a more violent generation, to whom, sometimes, he inevitably seemed sentimental. The early readers of either his sociological plays or of "The Man of Property" would have thought it fantastic to classify him as a conservative, and yet by comparison with younger writers that is what he came to seem. There was, as a matter of fact, nothing of the revolutionary about Galsworthy. Patrician by birth and in appearance, his sharp and trenchant criticism of the privileged class was criticism from within and was motivated primarily by a sense of *noblesse oblige*. Far less radical than Shaw or Wells and with less interest or faith in political schemes, he was a humanitarian rather than either a political or an economic radical. To him the dispossessed were objects of pity and the victims of wrongs, but he had none of that romanticism of the revolutionary which enables the latter to idealize the workingman or to make him, like Rousseau's Noble Savage, a reservoir of uncorrupted strength and

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virtue. Essentially Galsworthy was merely asking that those who have should be more just and more generous in their dealings with those who have not.

At the end of the play "Loyalties" one of the characters defends himself by saying that he has kept the faith and played the game. Another replies, "That is not enough," and this fragment of dialogue sums up better perhaps than anything else he wrote the essence of Galsworthy's criticism of English society. That society prided itself upon its honor, its justice, and its sense of fair play. Its code was rigid and it generally lived up to the code. But it never criticized the rules of the game it played, never asked if the rules themselves were reasonable or just. Galsworthy did ask that, and he rebuked, even if he did not damn, those who refused to ask themselves the questions which he asked them.

Many radicals of today would reply to Galsworthy in the very words quoted above: It is not enough. Nevertheless, it is probable that at least "The Forsyte Saga" will be long remembered, both because of the completeness of the picture which it gives of a certain class and because of the clear logic with which it analyzes and condemns the respectable ideals of a whole generation. The nineteenth century in England was preeminently the time when the idea of property as the central reality of life, as the source of honor and dignity and privilege, reached its full development. "The Forsyte Saga" is the real saga of the owning class.

Hitler's Role

EACH of the recent chancellors of Germany seems to have had a special role to play. It was Heinrich Brüning who first spoke the word that ended forever the annual payment of "tribute" to the victorious Powers. It was Kurt von Schleicher who achieved military equality for his country, at least in principle, by simply asserting that if equality was not granted, Germany would rearm. It has not been generally recognized, except by the nationalist press of France, that these two gestures in effect destroyed the Versailles system. Germany has already won its most important battles in the foreign field and now has only to consolidate these victories. What, then, is there left for Chancellor Hitler to do?

It has been suggested that the bankers and industrialists have temporarily elevated Hitler to power for the single purpose of frightening the American creditors of Germany into scaling down the huge private debt of the country. It is considered significant that the fascist leader was taken into the government at the very moment when the debt negotiations with the American bankers were beginning. It has also been suggested that Hitler will help to expedite the "liberation" of Central and Eastern Europe from French political control. However, his real mission appears to lie in the domestic field.

The election manifesto issued by his government clearly indicates what Hitler's role is to be. Ever since 1919 the industrialists, bankers, Junkers, and militarists have been fighting, by sabotage and other means, not only the republic but also that which they call "Marxism." Since June, 1932, when Franz von Papen became Chancellor, this fight has been conducted openly and without shame. What these groups mean by Marxism is not the socialism of Karl Marx but the state socialism inaugurated by Bismarck and taken over with very few changes by the democratic parties that came into power with the revolution of November, 1918. The reactionary industrialists and Junkers want to go back much farther than 1918; they want to go back at least a half century. They want the workers to submit patiently and meekly to a form of reactionary rule in which labor would have no voice whatever. Neither the Von Papen nor the Von Schleicher Government could gain this end so long as a large and important nationalist group, the Nazis, opposed the parties in power. But the followers of Hitler were dangerous and had to be purged of their socialistic inclinations. The reactionary elements could not hope to do this by propaganda—the Nazis had been fed too long on Hitler's demagogic promises. Nor could the goal be attained by setting the loyal Reichswehr against the Brown Shirt army, for that might open the way to communism. The only remaining course was to capture and tame the leader of the National Socialist movement, and this the reactionary groups seem to have accomplished.

The rank-and-file followers of Adolf Hitler must have received with mixed emotions the manifesto he read over the radio two days after he had accepted the chancellorship. His denunciation of communism sounded natural enough. But where were the other grandiose promises they had been hearing for years—the pledge to drive out the international bankers, to destroy the power of the liberal press and the big department stores, to restore the prosperity and property of the middle class through national socialism, to rehabilitate the small farmer by breaking up the estates of the landed gentry? Instead, the Nazis heard their leader vaguely promise that his government would set to work at some indefinite date on two four-year programs, one designed to help the farmer and the other to eliminate unemployment. Only one line in the manifesto had real, concrete significance. "To the pillars of this program," Hitler declared, "belongs the idea of compulsory labor service."

Compulsory labor service? In a society based on the profit system and controlled by bankers, industrialists, and militarists such service could only mean slavery of the worst conceivable sort. Are the dispossessed members of the middle class who make up the bulk of Hitler's following, not to mention the millions of Socialists and Communists, to be delivered into servitude for the greater glory and profit of the industrialists and military rulers of Germany? No other interpretation can possibly be placed on the manifesto. This is clearly the task for which Hitler has been chosen.

It remains to be seen how the Socialists and Communists will react to this terrible threat from above. The Hitler Government seems to have no fear of a general strike, the only weapon left to the radical workers. And there is some justification for this confident attitude. Last July Chancellor von Papen found it ridiculously easy to bluff the Socialists into surrendering control of the Prussian government. There is abundant evidence that he was afraid his bluff would be met with the same weapon the workers used in defeating the Kapp *Putsch* in 1920. But when the Socialists submitted to the July coup with only a feeble murmur of protest, Von Papen and his colleagues knew that they were safe. They suppressed the Communist newspapers for a few days, and found that nothing more was necessary to hold the workers in line. In the present situation they are following the same course. If the reactionary leaders, working through Hitler, succeed in these tactics, the German working class will without question be reduced to a state of servitude of a sort unknown to modern industrial history.

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"Compensating" Tariffs

IN a wave of hysteria accompanied by a gross distortion of facts, there seemed grave danger last week that Congress would pass and the President sign what would surely have proved to be one of the most disastrous pieces of legislation of the last four years—the so-called "compensating" tariff. This is at present embodied in the Hill bill, which proposes that where any currency is depreciated by 5 per cent or more from its former gold parity the Secretary of the Treasury may impose a "compensating" tariff in addition to the regular tariff against the goods of that country. Speaker Garner, fortunately, has spoken against hasty action by this session, but the question is certain to be raised again in the next session.

It should be pointed out, to begin with, that the absolute amount of the depreciation of any country's currency has no bearing whatever on its supposed ability to "undersell" its competitors. A drop of 50 per cent in the value of a country's currency does not help it in foreign trade if internal prices and costs have risen 50 per cent—as they eventually would—to offset this depreciation. The "advantage" in foreign trade of countries with depreciated currencies is thus entirely a transitional advantage. The Hill bill, it is true, attempts to take account of this by permitting the Secretary of the Treasury to allow for increases in prices and wages in the countries with depreciated currencies. But an allowance of this sort on any equitable basis is impossible, because it would be based on the relation of the depreciation to the average price level in the exporting country, and in this case the average price level is meaningless.

When a nation's currency is depreciating, commodities with an international market—those commodities, in other words, which mainly enter into foreign trade—rise first within the country, and their rise, in many cases, immediately offsets the depreciation in the currency, so that any added tariff on such goods would not merely be unnecessary, but would unduly discriminate against the country with the depreciated currency. Prices of many internal goods, on the other hand, would not rise at all, and though these goods would not enter into foreign trade, their failure to rise would keep down the "index numbers" of prices in that country. This fact in itself would make any "compensating" duties against that country on the basis suggested by the Hill bill altogether too high. In addition, the Secretary of the Treasury would constantly be under pressure from special interests to keep out foreign goods by prohibitive tariffs. This pressure would so greatly exceed any pressure on the other side that it would be almost impossible for him not to give way to it.

Wholly apart from such questions, however, and in spite of the long-standing and almost universally accepted myth to the contrary, it is simply not true that a country with a depreciated currency is able to flood other countries with goods. We have now before us the figures for trade with individual countries for the full year of 1932. These show sharp declines in imports from practically every country, compared with 1931. France sent us only $45,000,000 worth of goods in 1932, compared with $79,000,000 worth in 1931, a decline of 43 per cent. Germany has sent us only $74,000,000 worth in 1932, compared with $127,000,000 worth in 1931, a decline of 42 per cent. The exchange rate of both of these countries is still at gold parity. But one would certainly suppose from all the propaganda of the last year, that England, at least, had increased her exports to us. We find, however, that the United Kingdom sent us only $75,000,000 worth of goods in 1932, compared with $135,000,000 worth in 1931. This is a decline of 44 per cent, which, it is interesting to notice, is even greater than the decline in imports from the two principal European countries still adhering to the gold basis. Even from Japan, whose currency has fallen far more than that of Great Britain, and which appears to be the special hobgoblin of the compensating-tariff propagandists, imports fell in 1932 by 35 per cent compared with 1931, at the same time that our exports to Japan fell by only 13 per cent. While Japan sold us $134,000,000 worth of goods in 1932, we sold Japan $134,500,000 worth.

Not only have countries with recently depreciated currencies failed to increase their sales to us, or even to prevent sales to us from declining, but contrary to popular belief even in these countries themselves, depreciated currency has never really stimulated exports. In the five-year period from 1921 to 1925, for example, which roughly covers the period of the German inflation, Germany was shipping to the United States an average of only $132,000,000 worth of goods a year, and was buying from us $383,000,000 worth. B. M. Anderson, Jr., pointed out last November that France's proportion of exports to imports in the year 1919 to 1926, her period of inflation, was 74 per cent, whereas in the years 1927 to 1930, following stabilization, it was 92.2 per cent. Italy's ratio of exports to imports in the years 1919 to 1926 was 55.6 per cent, whereas in the years 1927 to 1930 the ratio was 71 per cent. Belgium's ratio of exports to imports in the same years prior to stabilization was 71.9 per cent, whereas it rose to 90.6 per cent in the years following stabilization.

The "flood" of goods from countries with depreciated currencies is a complete myth. The contrary impression is produced by a few isolated examples of increased sales of relatively unimportant items, which are given a fantastically exaggerated importance by special interests. But if imports from depreciated-currency countries were a real menace, the advocates of higher tariffs might stop to ask themselves what it was that threw those countries off the gold basis. To a large extent it was the tariff policy of the United States. We insist on debt payment; we refuse to allow our debtors to pay us in goods; we compel them to pay in gold; this depletes their gold reserve and forces them off the gold standard; this makes us fear that they are going to flood us with goods, whereupon we raise our tariff further; this further depreciates the foreign currency, and so on.

No recovery can be hoped for as long as this economic insanity continues. Our troubles are not the result of a flood of imports. The truth is the exact opposite. They are to an enormous extent the result of our policy of making imports—which pay for exports—increasingly difficult. The record of our imports in the last four years tells its own story:

1929....$4,400,000,000	1931....$2,090,000,000
1930....$3,060,000,000	1932....$1,323,000,000

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Issues and Men

Secession in the West

I RECENTLY stated in an address in Boston that the day of revolutions had passed because of the tremendous increase in the power of any government of a highly organized industrial country to suppress revolt. Modern instruments and methods of warfare, notably the wireless, poison gas, tanks, airplanes, high-powered artillery, and the machine-gun, have strengthened the hands of those in control. Good roads, too, have made a vast amount of difference. What would not cement roads have meant in our own Civil War, in which both armies calmly went out of business when the weather got cold and waited until spring came round again! Of course, when the government decays and loses control of the army and navy, and when the bulk of the people are ready for a change, any government will collapse as did that of Spain, with little or much fighting. But somehow or other I have not been able to visualize a section of this great country organizing an armed secession from the federal government as did the rebels of 1861.

Could there be peaceful secession? A friend of mine who lives on Cape Cod has for some time past been telling me that the secession of the West from the East is inevitable. He even believes that it will come within our lifetime. He harps upon it, produces fresh evidence every time he appears, and never fails to say that it is being engineered by Great Britain—which has always added to my skepticism about his thesis. But now from the Legislature of North Dakota comes a resolution which will certainly convince my friend on Cape Cod that the hour of secession is near. This resolution was introduced by State Senator W. E. Martin on January 16. In a long preamble it is stated that "since the close of the Civil War the States of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and New Jersey, because of their dense population and consequent dominant power in Congress, have so manipulated Congress and Congressional legislation that said States have become rich at the expense of the rest of the Union." The resolution goes on to say that the Eastern States, through their manipulation of tariff laws, have protected their manufacturing industry at the expense of the agricultural producers who have been without such protection, in consequence of which there has grown up "a financial oligarchy, with Wall Street as the center of the financial power of the Union." These Wall Street interests, it appears, are now seeking by means of the chain-banking system to obtain absolute control of the nation "with the purpose in view evidently of making the people of the thirty-nine States financial peons." More than that, the New York Stock Exchange and the house of Morgan are guilty not only of gambling in stocks, but of making "huge, unnecessary, and uncollectable loans to every country on earth"; and they have "induced the government of the United States to lend money to foreign governments which were then and are now unable to pay." These financial interests were also "the first in this country to talk war and demand that our young men offer their lives to protect their money." For these reasons the people of North Dakota are now fully and unalterably convinced that "said States have not and never will have the best interests of the rest of the nation at heart," and therefore they recommend that the remaining thirty-nine States "secede from the above-named States, carrying with us the Star-Spangled Banner, and leaving them the stripes, which they so richly deserve; let them continue to prey upon their own people and give them a free hand, but they must keep off us. All we will demand is that our remaining territory have no treaty or trade relations, no agreements or understandings whatsoever, no business or social connection" with them.

Now this sounds altogether ridiculous. Most people will set it down as the usual, wild-eyed Populist stuff out of the corn-fed West. It should not be dismissed so lightly. Extravagant and, from the practical point of view, ridiculous as it unquestionably is, it none the less is symptomatic of the tremendous feeling against the East throughout the West. Vast numbers of the people of the Western States believe everything stated in this preamble: that they have been exploited, robbed, and plundered by Eastern financiers; that, as becomes more and more apparent, the bankers had a great deal to do with putting us into the World War to protect their investments abroad; and that we achieved nothing in the war but the loss of 50,000 American lives and about $21,000,000,000. Much of this feeling is obviously well grounded in fact. More than that, the pressure of economic conditions in our Western States is terrific. The East does not begin to know what is actually happening there. Any honest newspaperman will tell you of the "stuff" that is thrown away in the metropolitan newspaper offices—stories of violence, distress, and action against the constituted authorities. The prevention by force of the sale of mortgaged farms, because it has assumed the proportions of a great popular movement, is now being reported in the New York papers.

Unfortunately, the average Eastern newspaper editor is unaware that any portion of the United States lies beyond the Hudson River. The editorial writers of our Eastern dailies rarely go West. If they do venture into the "wilds" they seldom go beyond the large cities, and even less often journey into the strictly agricultural communities. It may be alleged in reply that the Westerners do not know us, and do not understand the complicated questions of finance and international trade, which seem to them a magnificent conspiracy against their interests. That may be true, too, but the fact that I wish to stress in this article is that the feeling in the West against the East is growing so tremendously as to be a genuine cause for alarm. If the President-elect is wise he will give a great deal of attention to this situation. Certainly if things continue to go on as they have been going, the hostility of the West to the East will be something to be reckoned with, absurd as it is to talk of a break-up of the Republic.

Oswald Garrison Villard

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The Detroit Strike

By SAMUEL ROMER

Detroit, February 2

AT nine o'clock on Wednesday morning, January 11, a worker at the main tool-and-die-making plant of the Briggs Manufacturing Company was told by his foreman to step into the office and receive a wage cut. Instead, the worker went to the head of his shop committee and then, along with the other workers in his department, from floor to floor, announcing that a strike against wage cuts had been called. There were only about 450 men working in the plant then—but every one of them put away his tools and walked out. So began the first major labor struggle in Detroit since the period immediately following the war.

Today there are between 10,000 and 14,000* workers on strike at the four plants of the Briggs Company and at the Murray Manufacturing Company's plant. The huge Ford factories all over the country have shut down—admittedly because they cannot get bodies from the two factories crippled by the strikes; the Hudson Motor Company has shut down; and the Chrysler Motor Company plant is working on part time when ordinarily it would be operating at the peak of production. The story of these strikes is the story of how manufacturers seeking "low production costs" slashed wages, disregarding or dismissing the possibility that the victims might revolt, and of how unorganized workers spontaneously struck at a time when, according to the estimate of the Mayor's Unemployment Committee, there were more than 175,000 jobless in Detroit. It is a story of remarkable unity, not only between the strikers and the workers at other plants, but also between the employed and the unemployed. Incidentally, it exposes the class character of the Detroit daily newspapers.

Detroit in the past ten years has won renown among chambers of commerce as an open-shop area second only to Southern California. Advertisements by the various industrial associations boasted of an "open-shop paradise," while the vested interests were able to prevent effective enforcement of such social legislation as was passed by a reluctant legislature. Nevertheless, during the war period and immediately after, there was a strong Auto Workers' Union in Detroit. It boasted some 20,000 dues-paying members and was growing rapidly. But anti-red hysteria and the split in the Socialist movement caused the union slowly to lose strength, until in 1925 it was completely broken as the result of an ill-advised strike at the Fisher Body Corporation. The Auto Workers' Union became merely another Communist paper union.

The Detroit workers, in contradiction to the widely advertised Ford gospel of "high wages," were never really well paid. The automobile industry is a seasonal one. The factories slacken production during the fall months in order to prepare for new yearly models; and the automobile worker had to stretch the "high wages" of eight months to cover the full twelve-month period.

The automobile market collapsed with the crash of 1929, and the period of steady work was cut to three and four months or even less. In the mad scramble of the manufacturers to grab a slice of what little market there was, labor costs were slashed and slashed again. The workers took the cuts apathetically. They grumbled, it is true, but they were also aware of the fact that there were plenty of men ready to take their places if they did not care to work. The Auto Workers' Union endeavored to organize the men, but because of the powerful spy system in the automobile industry, the union had to function underground and it met with little success. A strike was called at the Fisher Body plant in Flint last year. It was greeted with cries of "red" and police brutality. The strike was lost and the few men who had harbored any idea of an automobile workers' revolt gave up hope. Wage cuts continued, the conveyer belt was stepped up, and conditions in the factories became increasingly worse. Men reported for work daily, waited around for hours, and if they were lucky, secured two hours of work. In one instance a worker received for two weeks the munificent sum of 49 cents. His total wage for the two weeks was $2.49, but $2 was held out by the company for factory insurance. During the two weeks, however, he had been called to work six times, spending 12 cents car fare each time. His net loss, therefore, was 23 cents.

It was after a 15 per cent wage cut at the huge Mack Avenue plant, which was regarded as a preliminary to cuts in the Briggs Company's other factories, that the men in the Vernor Highway plant began talking strike. Accepting the advisory leadership of the Auto Workers' Union, they elected shop committees and decided to meet the expected cut with a walkout. The cut came in less than a week and the men walked out. After a futile attempt at arbitration, the strike was called and a picket line established. The mere calling of the strike had immediate reverberations. In the Mack Avenue plant the cut was rescinded. At the Hudson Motor plant, where a 10 per cent wage cut had been posted, the cut was shortly after withdrawn.

At the striking plant, after fifty-two hours of picketing, the cut was rescinded—the first victory for strikers in Detroit since 1920. This victory was due to several causes, among them the refusal of tool-and-die-makers in other plants to accept the Briggs dies and the fact that pressure was undoubtedly brought to bear upon the Briggs Corporation by the Ford Company to hurry production in order that Ford might get his share of the market.

The daily newspapers carried not a word of the strike at the Vernor Highway plant, although every city desk was informed of the strike by telephone. During the strike one small item appeared to the effect that Briggs was hiring men, but the settlement was reached before any concerted attempt was made to break the strike. Despite this total lack of publicity, news of the victory spread among the workers like wildfire. And on the Thursday following the victory of the Briggs workers, between 900 and 1,400 employees of the Motor Products Company, manufacturers of automobile parts, walked out against a 15 per cent wage cut which had been announced January 1. Strikers said that girls working at the plant were getting as little as 8 cents an hour and men 17 cents. Under the slogan, "Give Us a Living Wage," the strikers drew up a list of de-

* The strike committee claims that 14,000 men are out; the company puts the figure at 10,000. Both estimates are given since it is obviously impossible to ascertain the exact number.

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mands which included rescinding of the wage cut, minimum wages of 40 cents an hour for men and 30 cents for women, recognition of grievance committees elected by the workers, and no discrimination against strike leaders. After an attempt by the Briggs Company to send its employees into the Motor Products plant and the refusal of these men to scab, the company granted not only each of the strikers' main demands, *but also a 15 per cent wage increase!*

The daily newspapers at the beginning published nothing about the strike. The men had appointed a publicity committee to deal with the newspapers, but at the strike meeting the publicity committee naively announced that it had no report to make since the newspapers had published nothing. Their ire aroused, the strikers elected a committee to call upon each city editor and threaten him with the picketing of his newspaper office if publicity were not given. Immediately following this action the newspapers grudgingly printed one-inch and two-inch items buried on inside pages, and even after the strike had been won, they mentioned only the fact that the men had gone back to work. The victory was not reported.

Following closely on the heels of the Motor Products strike, between 2,000 and 4,000 workers at the Highland Park plant of the Briggs Company and between 4,000 and 6,000 workers at the Mack Avenue plant of the same concern walked out in protest against low wages and "dead time." "Dead time" is the name given to the time spent by the workers in waiting between busy periods or in going from one part of the factory to another. The two strike committees joined forces and agreed not to go back separately. They were heartened by the news that the workers at two other plants of the Briggs Company, the Vernor Highway plant and the Meldrum Avenue plant, had walked out in sympathy and had declared their solidarity with the strikers in the other plants.

The strike committees established picket lines a thousand strong at the various plants, and then drew up their demands. These included abolition of what the strikers called "rackets," such as health and accident insurance, a minimum rate of 40 cents an hour, a nine-hour day and five-day week with time and one-half for overtime, abolition of "dead time," no victimization of strikers, and abolition of the vicious bonus piece-work system. The picket lines included not only strikers but many unemployed. Both the Unemployed Councils and the Unemployed Citizens' League had pledged their solidarity with the strikers and were using their influence to keep the jobless from strike-breaking. At the Murray plant, which has interlocking contracts with the Briggs Corporation for Ford and Lincoln bodies, the men decided to strike. Instead, the company locked them out. The men, nevertheless, formed strike committees and decided not to return until demands similar to those of the Briggs workers were granted. In Grand Rapids more than 450 workers walked out against a wage reduction of 25 per cent in the Hayes Body Corporation plant, which manufactures bodies for Continental Motors.

Little was said about the strike in the newspapers until the Briggs Company officials decided to break it. While they refused to meet with the negotiations committee elected by the men or to deal with them collectively, they offered a jumbled pay scale and the abolition of "dead time." Immediately the Detroit *News* ran a huge two-line scarehead: "Briggs Raises Rates; Will Open Tomorrow." Over the radio the word went out too—"The strike is over, the company has conceded the demands of the workers and will begin production tomorrow." What both the newspapers and the radio failed to mention was that the strikers in a mass-meeting had voted down the proposed settlement and had declared that they would go back only as an organized body.

The Briggs officials publicly gave as their excuse for not dealing with the strikers in a body the alleged fact that the strike was Communist. The men, however, vehemently denied the charge and pointed to the fact that they had picketed with American flags and had excluded known Communists from the strike committee. The newspapers played up the proud announcement of the Briggs officials that, contrary to certain rumors, they had never paid workers less than 25 cents an hour—despite the fact that picketers were showing checks ranging from $3 to $8 for two weeks' work, which the strikers maintained meant rates of 8 cents and 10 cents an hour, and that strikers from the sewing department declared that the girls working there on a piece-work basis averaged from 3½ cents to 5 cents an hour.

In what strikers declared was an effort to turn public sympathy away from them, Ford announced the closing of his plants throughout the country and the consequent laying off of nearly 150,000 men. This story, of course, gained the front pages of the papers. That the strikers' contention was in many ways correct may be deduced from a leading editorial on the strike which appeared in the *Free Press*, organ of reaction in Detroit. After conceding that the conditions were bad, the writer declared: "They [the strikers] should remember, too, that they owe consideration to their fellow-workers; and that if they remain idle after securing the ratification of their principal grievance [abolition of "dead time"] they will be depriving more than 150,000 men and women in other plants of the means of livelihood, by forcing those plants to remain closed through lack of construction material."

When Briggs officials asked for workers from the welfare rolls and the employment bureau of the Mayor's Unemployment Committee, both the welfare department and the committee refused to send workers over after they learned of the strike. The Briggs Company has had great difficulty in recruiting workers to break the strike, although it maintains that it has smuggled 1,000 workers into the two main plants. The strikers feel secure in the knowledge that such key workers in the plants as the electricians and the tool-and-die-makers are striking solidly.

The strike has been orderly and the picket lines have been well disciplined, especially in view of the provocation offered by the presence of literally hundreds of policemen, deputy sheriffs, special deputies, and State troopers. There have only been a few minor cases of violence against strike-breakers. Although the police in general have let the pickets alone, in Highland Park they arrested about twenty of them on charges of disorderly conduct because the pickets dared to yell derisively at strike-breakers or went through the lines encouraging the men. If the present strike is won, it undoubtedly will mean the organization of nearly the entire automobile industry. The mere fact of the strike has already resulted in a tremendous surge of workers toward the Auto Workers' Union. But even if the strike is lost, as long as low wages remain, as long as the speed-up exists, so long will walkouts against wage cuts and bad conditions take place with ever-increasing frequency. Only the return of prosperity and the restoration to the workers of a minimum living wage will stop this unrest. And prosperity is not in sight.

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Trotzky and Revolution

By BENJAMIN STOLBERG

I

THE official Communists, with neurotic venom, dismiss Trotzky as a "counter-revolutionary." Middle-class critics, unless they too are afflicted with the incompetence of hate, do not deny that his work is brilliantly imaginative, vastly disciplined, felicitous in insight and "invective." But objectivity, they add, is of course impossible to him. This is now the reaction to his "History of the Russian Revolution."* It is fascinating polemics, we are told, important, to be sure, because Trotzky wrote it. But, of course, it isn't history.

To me the "History" is the most objective, the most passionately objective, study of revolution I have ever read. It has a creative objectivity. Trotzky evaluates not "facts," but their social origins and direction within the historical perspective which inspired and guided the revolution. It is not a filing cabinet in book form. It is the proud story, too proud either to defame or to boast, of a great social epic. Since there is no way of bringing out the truly poetic objectivity of Trotzky as the historian of the revolution without relating his own role and morale to its theory and nature, I shall briefly attempt such an estimate. From it a review of the study itself follows so naturally that the barest epitome will suffice.

II

Most revolutions, as in Latin America, are fakes. The outs try to shoot their way in. Modern history can show very few authentic revolutions. The seventeenth-century revolution in England, the American Revolution, and the Civil War are genealogically connected. The French Revolution, a cousin of our own, is continued in the Russian. The revolutionary labors in each culture differ profoundly, a point rather neglected by our latter-day Communist Adventists. But the social consanguinity is there. The lesser shocks of 1830, 1848, 1871, the long and critical confinement of the German revolution since 1918, the counter-revolutions of Mussolini and MacDonald, the desperate crisis in capitalism—these may all be significantly viewed as the fruits of the same social family tree, which like all trees is materially conditioned. That is, its adjustment to its natural resources determines its life and health. Marxism says just that. On this theory, ponderously known as "dialectical materialism," is based the Marxian *philosophy* of history. Trotzky, in discussing the tactics of the revolution, implicitly, illustratively, illuminatingly moves within this historical conception. He forever dwells on this "organic nature" of social change.

Into the warp of its philosophy Marxism weaves the threads of its *economics*. Its economics, of course, is socialistic. It is the well-known critique of capitalism, pointing to its final socialization. The philosophy and economics of Marxism are integral. Together they form its *ideology*. Trotzky never steps out of it. A born writer, he superbly directs his vast and meticulously documented material within this ideology, which so consciously, and hence "objectively," guided the victorious revolutionary party. Such is the "inner logic" of history to which he constantly refers.

The Marxian ideology is, on the whole, accepted by all Socialists; increasingly even by middle-class economists, as can be seen in "Recent Social Trends." The controversy really rages about the Marxian *politics*. It is the politics of revolution, it is the method of guiding the class struggle, which causes Socialist sectarianism and excites the modern world. To this revolutionary *strategy* the clearest and the ablest contribution is Leninism. It clarifies not merely Bolshevik doctrine but the historic role of every other social force. Leninism may or may not have correlated these forces too sharply on the international scale. But be that as it may, it was Leninism which mastered and directed the Russian Revolution. And within this Leninist strategy Trotzky was the great and undeviating tactician. Any other "objective" criterion of Trotzky's revolutionary contribution is irrelevant, for there was none.

III

Leninism proper consists of certain theoretical corrections mainly in the politics of Marxism, not in its ideology. It also consists in the creation of a revolutionary ethics. The main Leninist correction of Marxism holds that the best way of attacking capitalist imperialism is indirectly, through its more primitive and semi-colonial tributaries. In short, Lenin created an apologetics for the social revolution in Russia without waiting for it in the more highly developed West. The natural corollary to this doctrine is the theory of "permanent revolution," now known as Trotzkyism, which was developed by Lenin and Trotzky together between 1915 and 1917. It is the belief that a successful social revolution "in one country" is necessarily only partial and therefore must keep on until it gains international victory. Trotzky discusses the tactics of the October revolution strictly within these Leninist principles, which, be they true or false, none the less determined that revolution.

But for the psychological understanding of Trotzky, both as leader and historian, it is even more essential to grasp the nature of the Leninist social ethics as a guide to revolutionary tactics. The tragedy of revolution lies in its moral dilemma, in the deep conflict between the great aim and the desperate means. The aim is a new society. Accordingly the means must defy the culture in which the revolutionary lives and is forced to act. Such defiance may either ruin the revolution or cause the revolutionary to deteriorate, or both. One of the major problems of every great revolution has been the spiritual need of protecting itself against the disintegrating effects of its means. Lenin resolved this conflict. He could do so because the Marxian ideology furnished the revolution with a "program." Cromwell, Jefferson, Robespierre—all had a theory of revolutionary destruction, but they had no clear program of social construction afterwards. Cromwell had to compromise with feudalism. The old Jefferson already could see the dusk of democracy. Robespierre stood

* "The History of the Russian Revolution." Volumes II and III. By Leon Trotzky. Translated by Max Eastman. Simon and Schuster. $3.50 a volume.

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at the top of the Terror, but from there he had no place to go and so he fell under its knife. It was the Marxian critique, based on these prior revolutionary experiences, which enabled Lenin to forge his social strategy. From the Marxian sociology he constructed a new social ethics. From its revolutionary determinism he deduced a consistent body of revolutionary sanctions. It was a true revaluation of values. And Trotzky's "History" moves entirely within this revolutionary ethics; which goes with the Leninist strategy; which, you will note, is derived from the Marxian economy; which in turn is part of its philosophy of history. It is this inner symmetry which makes Trotzky's "History" the great work of art it is.

Trotzky's psychology of leadership can also be best understood in his relation to Lenin's role in the revolution. It is precisely because Trotzky was not an "old" Bolshevik, not a revolutionary sectarian before 1917 and a revolutionary yes-man after that, that he and Lenin developed their uniquely supplementary leadership. For his destiny Lenin had such a perfect inner balance that he finally merged with it. He had the supreme gift of converting ideas into convictions and these into an organon of action. In time all his qualities became purely strategic. He became implicit in the revolutionary process. He rendered it conscious. His personal psychology became indistinguishable from the sociology of revolution. That was the secret of his seeming simplicity. In short, Lenin lost himself in the revolution. As Lenin *lost* himself in the revolution, Trotzky *found* himself in it. This unique correlation in leadership can be traced way back to 1902. Lenin was always behind the scenes. Trotzky was always magnificently visible. Lenin became organic to the revolution. Trotzky was its great actor. Lenin is all ideology. Trotzky is the Great Idea. Lenin made the revolution and Trotzky led the insurrection. But throughout strategy and tactics were integral. This tactical genius in Trotzky, extraordinarily aware of every larger implication, explains his journalistic gift and the epic quality in all his writings, especially in his "History."

The revolution, both in fact and under his historical analysis, intensely clarifies and sifts the rush of social forces. Throughout the three volumes we can watch the tug and pull of class relations, right and left. The revolutionary danger strains men and events almost to the bursting-point. And under its pressure the invisible forces of society, for the moment, are forced into plot and counterplot. Life becomes a terrible and obligatory melodrama. And leaders are driven almost in spite of themselves to act according to their natures and their class affiliations.

Kerensky, the little bourgeois lawyer who all his life had sought publicity in libertarian movements, and had even flirted with "socialism," is thrown to the top, and in three short months his inner weakness becomes positively macabre in its strident meaninglessness. Zinoviev, a really marvelous demagogue, Marat-like in his sensitiveness to every mood of the masses, finally fails in "revolutionary character" as the day of insurrection nears. Stalin, whose strength of character Trotzky readily admits, votes with Lenin for the coup d'etat, yet as editor of the *Pravda* subtly plays with Zinoviev and with Kamenev. The eternal centrist in his case is not hesitating. He is waiting. Miliukov, Rodzianko, Kornilov, literally hundreds of personalities, are shown under the revolutionary searchlight. By far the most tragic figures are those old revolutionaries—Cheidze, Tseretelli, Martov, Kropotkin—with years of imprisonment behind them, who wavered, compromised, and were lost.

IV

Russia had had no prior revolution, no Cromwell, no reformation, no eighteenth-century revolution. The year 1905 was but a dress rehearsal for 1917. Accordingly, the Russian Revolution, from March to October, 1917, had to recapitulate in its social embryology all these historic experiences. The February revolution, which supplanted Czarism with a liberal government, really lasted until June, when hostile mass demonstrations made an official bourgeois government impossible. Kerensky, who had had Socialist connections as a member of the Labor Party, moved up from the Ministry of War to the head of the government. With the "July days" of increased mass unrest, the second volume of the "History" begins.

Lenin arrived in Petrograd on April 3, and the next day he promulgated the famous April Theses. In the midst of the compromise revolution he drove toward the social revolution. On May 4 Trotzky came, and joined Lenin. But in July the great task of the Communist Party was to put the brakes on the Petrograd masses lest the revolution run away with itself. The Bolsheviks had the extraordinarily difficult task of simultaneously leading the masses, yet holding them back. The masses still had confidence in the Kerensky Government, which they expected to complete the social revolution. The Bolsheviks had to wait until the middle-class character of that government became too obvious for such a hope. It was the relation of the government of Kerensky to the counter-revolution led by Kornilov which finally compromised the Kerensky regime.

The Kornilov affair is one of the most bizarre incidents in history. Kerensky put Kornilov, a half-illiterate Cossack general, in command of the army at the front to keep Russia in the war. When the social revolution seemed imminent, he called on him to crush it. Kornilov, of course, planned his own dictatorship. Kerensky vaguely hoped to beat him to it. Their strange half-dealings with each other read like a chapter out of "The Brothers Karamazov." Finally Kornilov was defeated by the revolutionary situation. His drive on Petrograd was doomed to abort in a *Putsch*. The armed forces were almost completely revolutionized. The peasant in the rear "with revolutionary barbarism was wiping out the barbarism of the Middle Ages." The urban workers were rushing to the left. Having "defeated" the white reaction, Kerensky now turned against Bolshevism.

From mid-July to mid-September he gathered around him for an attack on the left all the forces arrayed against the social revolution—the liberals, the Mensheviks, the Right Social Revolutionaries, the Anarchists. But the primitive and stunted Russian middle class was played out. Lenin saw his chance. From mid-September on he pleaded and begged and fought in the inner councils of the party for the insurrection. Finally he had his way. And Trotzky, as chairman of the Military Revolutionary Committee, took charge of the coup d'etat. The "ten days that shook the world" lasted from October 16 to October 26.

The world was dazed. The international social revolution seemed to have begun. Now we know better. Russia merely took the next great step in the modern revolution.

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The October revolution swung back; and then started out on a long career of state capitalism, of which the natural managers are Socialist functionaries and politicians. The Third International today is the agent of Russian nationalism, not of the international revolution. Its counter-revolutionary influence is only too visible in the antics of the American Communist Party, for instance, which quickly "liquidates" the least effort of our indigenous radicalism.

So, after all, Lenin did not resolve the dilemma of the "permanent revolution." What he did not know was that he was great enough to found a church. That is how the man whom he intellectually most distrusted inherited his "mantle." While his most intimate revolutionary comrade is now a "counter-revolutionary" exile.

Trotzky reads like a master of English prose. One need say no more of Max Eastman as his translator.

The Company Roosevelt Keeps

By PAUL Y. ANDERSON

Washington, February 4

HAPPY days are not here yet and there will be ample time after they arrive to burn Roman candles, but Roosevelt certainly performs as if he desired to give the country a civilized Administration. I judge him mainly by the company he has been keeping of late. He was acting of his own free will when he sought the friendship and cooperation of Norris, Johnson, Cutting, and La Follette. Since his party will have large majorities in both houses of the next Congress, his deliberate fraternizing with the Progressive Senators is hard to explain except on the ground that he has progressive aims of his own. For my part I am thoroughly convinced that he entertains the ambitious hope of merging the Progressive movement with the Democratic Party. From the day he was nominated, the power trust feared the worst, and fear froze into conviction when he visited Muscle Shoals with Norris. He has accorded what was diffidently described as "a sympathetic hearing" to the hunger-relief bill now pending in the Senate, thus signifying that "rugged individualism"—Hoover's celebrated formula for slow starvation—is to be scrapped in favor of common decency. Much that we hear about the probable composition of the Cabinet is equally encouraging. Henry Wallace and Miss Frances Perkins would be ideal appointments. The choice of that iron rod of righteousness, Senator Walsh, as Attorney-General would be sufficient proof that the new Administration harbored no conscientious scruples against enforcement of the anti-trust laws. In fact, I am told there was a time when ex-Governor Philip La Follette was seriously considered in that connection—a thought sufficient to send cold shivers down the spine of big business. The appointment of Senator Cordell Hull as Secretary of State, which now seems possible, could be explained on the ground that Roosevelt wanted someone to negotiate his proposed reciprocal tariff agreements, Hull being an authority on the tariff. In addition, however, he is a man of the very highest character, possessing a fine intelligence and identified with no private interest which could influence him in the discharge of his duties. To the suggested line-up there is only one serious objection: if Roosevelt puts Walsh, Hull, and Carter Glass in the Cabinet he will deprive his party in the Senate of three of its ablest members, who will be needed in putting through any broad program.

* * * * *

THERE, of course, we come to the heart of Roosevelt's problem. With the best intentions, and with excellent assistants, he can avoid disaster only by appearing on the job with a comprehensive program for licking the depression. He must be prepared to render emergency relief to the millions in actual physical distress. He must be prepared to create jobs for the millions who are able to work. He must be ready with measures calculated to expand export trade—which should include prompt recognition of Russia. Some form of currency inflation appears to be the only alternative to a general scaling down of private debts and interest rates. Obviously, the public debt should be refunded on more favorable terms at the earliest possible moment. Above all, it is imperative to adopt a scale of income and inheritance taxes which will correct the appalling maldistribution of wealth which makes millionaires of a few and paupers of a majority. The new President will find conditions auspicious for the enactment of a broad program. The very desperateness of the situation will be an aid. The country plainly is ready to try anything that offers a ray of hope. Congress will follow almost blindly. The one indispensable thing is that President-elect Roosevelt shall have a program.

* * * * *

DURING the last ten days the daily press has almost ignored one of the most significant pieces of news that have "broken" in Washington in years. In testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee John P. Frey, secretary-treasurer of the Metal Trades Department of the American Federation of Labor, charged that a few New York banks are rapidly establishing a dictatorship over American business through interlocking directorates and financial intimidation. The evidence was startling. He gave the names of 855 corporations, including many of the largest in the country, in which directors of the Chase National Bank hold interlocking directorships. He showed that the firm of J. P. Morgan and Company, through its own partners and through banks over which it exercises a dominant influence, has representation on the boards of railroads, insurance companies, mines, and corporations engaged in the manufacture and distribution of everything from locomotives to radio tubes and two-pants suits. The ramifications of the National City Bank made a similar picture. Frey produced evidence to show that these bankers are deliberately forcing employers to reduce wages. Many employers had told him they were helpless under the dictation of the banks. What is happening seems obvious enough. Through a merciless squeezing process, piously described as "allowing the depression to run its course," these twentieth-century Huns are reducing the whole of American industry to a state of economic peonage, and if permitted will soon succeed in establishing a degree of concentrated control heretofore believed impossible. To tell

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them that they are pulling down the temple on their own heads is useless—you might as well tell a hog to diet. I once remarked in this place that a moron could always learn something in this country, no matter how many millions he had. That was a mistake. If all persons having incomes of $1,000,000 a year and over, together with their lawyers, were placed in iron cages and cut off from all communication, it is my solemn belief that conditions would start to improve within ten days. The theory has been advanced by McConnell, Cram, and others that many members of *homo sapiens* are not true human beings, but merely bipeds. It gains much support from the social morals of bankers.

* * * * *

IT will be observed that the main benefits accruing to the public from the present session of Congress are the result of Senate investigations. One is the exposure of the banking conspiracy; another is the public airing of R. F. C. loans to the railroads. Infuriated by what he pronounced an effort by R. F. C. directors to mislead him in an earlier inquiry, Jim Couzens went into action with all guns blazing, and the result is that some of our most interesting suspicions have been confirmed. For instance, it now appears that of more than $270,000,000 lent to the railroads by this benevolent agency of Uncle Sam, nearly $200,000,000 was to enable them to pay their debts. In other words, a vast sum of public funds has been provided to support rotten capital structures that are in obvious need of being squeezed out. Here again, as Commissioner Eastman remarks, the evil in receiverships lies in the fact that the bankers invariably seize the initiative and formulate reorganization plans to their own profit. Drastic reforms in procedure are needed to protect the public interest. Still another Senate investigation which promises well is that which Senator Robinson, the Democratic leader, has demanded in connection with the granting of air-mail contracts to private aviation companies. This pleasant little graft—running to upward of $10,000,000 a year—has wanted investigating for a long time. When Senator Robinson undertakes the job he might be rewarded by answers to the following questions: What former officials of the Post Office Department are financially interested in companies enjoying air-mail contracts? What former public officials represented those companies in their negotiations with the Post Office Department? Did the Republican Party in the last two Presidential campaigns receive substantial contributions from persons financially interested in air-mail contracts? Have certain companies been unduly favored with "route extensions" during Postmaster-General Brown's term of office? Have the air-mail subsidies been apportioned in a manner calculated to promote the development of air lines, or have they actually aided certain large companies in destroying their competitors or forcing mergers? If Postmaster-General Brown possesses a head commensurate with the silk hat which he was unable to get into an ordinary Lincoln limousine, he should have all the answers at his finger tips.

* * * * *

WE are, thanks to Senator Norris, approaching the end of the last lame-duck session it will ever be our lot to suffer. I am impressed by the unanimity with which the newspapers rejoice over this fact. But among the editors who now find the lame-duck Congress so loathsome, how many took the trouble to denounce the Longworth-Tilson-Snell leadership of the House during the ten-year period in which it blocked submission of the constitutional amendment abolishing such sessions? I should just like to know.

In the Driftway

THE theater program of "We, the People," Elmer Rice's new play, reprints the following comment on the behavior of New York theater audiences from the New York *Mirror* of October 13, 1832:

> The character of the audience has much improved lately, yet still there are outrages on good breeding such as are unworthy of a refined people. Gentlemen *will* wear hats in the boxes, even before ladies. . . . Noises interrupt the performance. . . . As for those worthy personages who can wantonly destroy the effect of a finely acted scene, they are, we fear, below reproof. . . . We can only recommend the better informed, when sitting near such persons, to guard their pockets, which, if ever, must be then in danger.

It is an amusing coincidence that these lines appeared in the program of a play which aroused the audience to such demonstrations as would have shocked the *Mirror's* commentator, no doubt, beyond expression.

* * * * *

AN average contemporary New York audience is not given to expressing its feelings beyond the conventional clapping of hands or appreciative laughter. But Mr. Rice's attack upon the complacent and the well-fed was so direct and so forceful that his well-fed, fur-coated audience could hardly be expected to remain complacent. The excitement began when a hundred-per-cent American on the stage asserted in ringing tones that foreigners should pay their debts. A wave of handclapping rose from what the Drifter will call the right benches. Whereupon the left hissed a mighty hiss; and for several seconds the audience neglected Mr. Rice's drama for their own. Through the whole evening the audience was on its toes, and while the ermined ladies in the front rows did not actually talk back to Mr. Rice, the Drifter had the distinct impression that the violent applause and the cries of "Author" which went up when the curtain went down might have arisen either from intense approval or an intense and perhaps unconscious desire to lay vindictive hands upon a man so disrespectful in his attitude toward the best people.

* * * * *

MR. RICE'S play, as everybody knows, is an indictment of those forces which seem to him responsible for hunger and injustice in present-day America. He minces no words in illustrating his thesis, and the last scene, the appeal for justice, though it is set in a public auditorium, is in fact addressed to the audience itself. It was stirring and effective. Complacency, the Drifter reflected as the crowd dispersed, could not persist under the impact of Mr. Rice's reality. Two overheard remarks broke the spell. Said Mrs. Moleskin, "Mr. Rice must feel very strongly about these things." "It was awfully good," said Mrs. Mink, "but a little depressing, don't you think?" To which Mr. Rice might have replied, "It is."

THE DRIFTER

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Correspondence

Isn't It Too Bad?

To the Editors of The Nation:

So Technocracy is dead. Henry Hazlitt's annihilation of the data and conclusions of Technocracy came as a welcome reinforcement to those of us who had stood dazed before the miracle of Technocracy's publicity value.

But isn't it a little too bad? After all, what the Technocrats aimed at was a planned economy on a national scale. Their crazy figures caught the public imagination. But is that not because for 99 per cent of the people of the country planned economy is the only hope? And because Howard Scott rigged up a man of straw which enemies and friends of planned economy alike rejoice in tearing down, will not the voting millions once more shy away from all planned economy, with the idea that they have been fooled into thinking and won't be caught again?

New York, January 27 Henry Willcox

Life and Art

To the Editors of The Nation:

As one who has been a teacher of young children for a short time in the past and who hopes to join that profession again in the fall, I should like to challenge the remarks of Elizabeth C. Wallach in a letter published in *The Nation* of January 11. She maintains that "we should teach our children that literature is not an escape from their environment but an aid in conquering it." She does not approve literature that offers no help for "the present problems of youth"; she condemns the "impulse, not confined to children, to avoid actuality and revel in a jolly world." At almost any other time, since people are generally disregardful of the importance of "sexual, social, and economic" problems, it might be well to remind them that it is a wholesome thing to face reality and try to understand it. But in these days, when reality is starkly and grimly revealed to everyone, almost without distinction, it seems to me that occasional escape from the world is very valuable.

Does Miss Wallach mean that art can never be its own excuse for being? Are we always to read with the object of finding a solution to our problems and difficulties? I do not mean to deny that art may be of great value in relation to the lives of men. It must be or it would not endure. But is it not permissible to read for appreciation, or love, or just for fun? I should certainly think twice before discarding Dorothy Canfield Fisher, or depriving children of Mother Goose.

Oberlin, Ohio, January 23 Dorothy Parsons

By Any Other Name

To the Editors of The Nation:

Gabriel Heatter, in an Open Letter to Norman Thomas in *The Nation* of December 14, contends that millions of voters would rally to a new liberal party if it were "sufficiently divorced from socialism as they understand it." But could not the opponents of socialism who got the "farmers, laborers, and small merchants" to understand that socialism is an "alien philosophy of government which includes everything from atheism to the nationalization of women" easily get them to understand the

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same things concerning a party bearing any other name? An electorate which is stupid enough to be misled in regard to the aims of socialism will be misled in regard to the aims of any other party, of whatever name.

Many of my acquaintances throughout the country who a few years ago would have replied to any suggestion for social betterment by indignantly saying, "But that is socialistic, I hope you're not a Socialist," are now saying, "Something has just got to be done for the common people." When I reply, "But that's socialistic," they say, "I know it is, but I've come to think the Socialists are pretty nearly right about that."

East Orange, N. J., January 10 J. B. R.

Miners on Strike

To the Editors of The Nation:

The areas of hope in this country today are those communities where workers have taken their courage and the lives of their families into their hands in striking out for themselves against conditions which are beyond human endurance. In Illinois the miners have organized themselves into the Progressive Miners of America. Some operators have settled with the union, but the powerful Peabody-Insull coal interests around Taylorville and Springfield look to the exploited Kentucky coal region to break the strike of the miners in Illinois. Miners at work—most of them work only part time—contribute one dollar each pay day to their relief fund. During the winter months accidents increase because the ordinary hazards underground multiply. The cost of burial of the dead and help for the injured takes away much of the funds. At least 10,000 miners and their families in central Illinois today are utterly dependent on the money and clothes our committee can send them.

In West Virginia the union is in friendly alliance with the Progressive Miners. A strike at Coalburg waged during this last month of snow and cold is the forerunner of another and larger strike which may become unavoidable in the early spring. In the tent colonies all over the Kanawha Valley babies die by the score. Before a child is a year old in these camps it has run the gauntlet of every form of disease. The whole population is hungry and sick. Still farther south, in Wilder, Tennessee, coal miners are carrying on a lone battle against the company and a community which fails to sympathize with them in their plight.

Our plea is simple and direct. We know in your own midst there is suffering which must be assuaged. But friendless miners, sometimes lacking in hope, shut up in their tents or little houses crowded with children, need money and clothing in their struggle against the organized operators. Please send money and clothing at once to Room 1105, 112 East Nineteenth Street, New York City. Make checks payable to the Emergency Committee for Strikers' Relief, to Norman Thomas, chairman, or to Reinhold Niebuhr, treasurer.

New York, January 16 Norman Thomas

Congratulations

To the Editors of The Nation:

Permit me to congratulate you on your excellent attack on the Edison Company. It is time that a representative periodical such as *The Nation* took a courageous stand against individual companies as well as against the whole electric industry.

As a Manhattan consumer I hope that a similar investigation will soon be made in this borough.

New York, January 12 Lena Rabinowitz

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Midwinter Book Section

The Best People's Best Novelist

By CLIFTON FADIMAN

IT is a matter for sincere regret that his once large and enthusiastic audience has fallen away from Mr. Hergesheimer; and that vanished are those Cytherean days when reputable critics guaranteed "he need have few fears of rivalry for his position as America's foremost novelist." With admirable energy and determination Mr. Hergesheimer has now worked himself into a position of considerable obscurity. But this obscurity should not be accepted at its face value or be permitted to overcast his real importance. To the thoughtful reader he must appear one of our most interesting writers.

For twenty years Mr. Hergesheimer has written novels, short stories, and even autobiographies about people who do not work for a living. In the mucilage of his style he catches every detail of the life of the leisure class, omitting, indeed, only the comparatively minor matter of the effect this class has had upon the negligible rest of us. It is no mean achievement: to have been the Sargent of the modern American novel. And now history comes to lend even greater point to his work. The class to which for twenty years he has dedicated himself with almost fanatical devotion—even to the martyr's gesture of binding himself to the *Post*—is apparently disappearing or changing into a quite different thing. He is the chronicler of a disappearing Atlantis—and therefore a writer of great historical interest. As the only contemporary romancer whose relevance ceased with the stock crash of November, 1929, he will be to the literary paleontologist of the future a figure of primary importance.

What gives Mr. Hergesheimer his supreme position as a pre-depression novelist is not merely the completeness of his survey of the aristocracy but its rigorous unity. Just as the Greek drama depends upon a particular theology, so Mr. Hergesheimer's work is, in every slightest detail, dependent upon still another theology—that of money. His masterpiece, "Cytherea," contains a chiseled phrase referring to "the undistinguished evils of improvidence"; but aside from this slight lapse, there is never any vulgar relaxation of Mr. Hergesheimer's social sympathies. Money polarizes every one of his characters; they are free to act and feel only in accordance with the liberty with which their bank balances endow them. Mr. Hergesheimer's most glamorous heroine, Linda Condon, trades herself in (though still unused) for fifty thousand a year; the flight of Lee Randon and Savina depends for its effect on the money they are able to spend while making their escape from the vulgarities of the upper middle class. It is a measure of her exquisiteness that the slightest discomfort destroys completely Savina's equilibrium. "Savina's bottles on a dressing-table were engraved crystal with gold stoppers: it was all as it should be."

Mr. Hergesheimer's world of gold stoppers is a world of complete logic and exclusiveness, an architecture erected upon the excellent foundation of stocks and bonds. Of all the writers of his time Mr. Hergesheimer has the clearest and most consistent view of the presuppositions of life. He knows on what terms life must be met—profitable terms only. Thus after the uncertainties of Dreiser or Anderson it is sheer relief to fall back on Mr. Hergesheimer's gold stoppers and feel that all is as it should be.

However, even the best of all possible worlds may have to yield to a new one. Mr. Hergesheimer's closely knit universe is passing. And because it is passing, Mr. Hergesheimer's pages become of greater and greater value. For these pages are unstirred by the foul intrusion of any breath save the wind blowing through the musical colossus of Mammon. They distil the pure essence of conspicuous waste. Can any of Mr. Hergesheimer's contemporaries present as proud a claim?

In the preface to "Quiet Cities" Mr. Hergesheimer muses upon one of his characters, Nicholas Elliset of the Boston of 1840:

> Above all, I was engaged by his frank contempt for writers. He regarded them, and not without justice, as a sort of paid entertainers. They were not, then, very highly paid, they couldn't have Bulfinch build their houses, and so his attitude was comparatively easy to follow. It had the support of a general recognition. No one today could lay down his clear social lines; no one today, the truth was, wanted to. The orchestra had been moved to the dinner table. The necessity for constant amusement, amusement at any price, had taken the place of a strict social integrity.

Such passages exhibit Mr. Hergesheimer as a genuinely modest man. He is under no illusions as to his status as a writer. He feels the justice of Mr. Elliset's view of the writer as "a sort of paid entertainer." He confesses, with admirable candor, that up to 1917 (the year of "The Three Black Pennys") "the note of popular sentiment still evaded me." There is no nonsense about Mr. Hergesheimer. This clear conception of his role and its complete coherence with the spirit of his books give him his special integrity of character. He is an entertainer, the jongleur of a—regrettably—modern feudalism.

But Mr. Hergesheimer, with proper pride, continually reminds us that he is not merely an entertainer but a paid entertainer. Unlike the jongleur he is himself a member of a privileged class endowed with certain inalienable rights—among them the right to the life, liberty, and happiness of others. Thus, while Mr. Hergesheimer has no false vanity about his art, he is justly proud of the feudally aristocratic position his art enables him to maintain. He is beyond any doubt our best gentleman writer, the one with the clearest apprehension of what it is that differentiates him from vassal and serf. In the words of Savina Grove: "All law and order were made for the mob. I don't need the policeman I see in the street."

It is extremely important for us to understand this feudal viewpoint, for otherwise Mr. Hergesheimer's work cannot be fully appreciated. Of late, for example, he has

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shown a tendency to satirize his own class. But we must remember that Mr. Hergesheimer is more royalist than the king. Today's aristocrats do not come up to snuff. That is because they have relinquished their snuff-boxes. They have been spoiled by a democratic association with the lower classes. Accordingly, in his endeavor to express the true gentlemanly ideal, Mr. Hergesheimer is frequently forced to return to the past, to feudal or semi-feudal states of society. Hence, in his stories of the past—"The Three Black Pennys," "Java Head," "The Bright Shawl," "Balisand," "Quiet Cities"—he condenses his most telling criticism of the shortcomings of the present. The structure of modern capitalism is too shifting: where are the fixed classes and positions, for example, of pre-Civil War days? For real breeding one must go back to pre-Revolutionary times, to duels and to knee breeches. (Does this, by the way, account for Mr. Hergesheimer's own pure passion for plus-fours?) His feeling for the days when the bearing of arms was a mark of honor is not that of a romantic antiquarian, as some critics have basely asserted. For Mr. Hergesheimer the duello is a very real thing; it is not mere romance, but the true sign of a gentleman. In "Balisand" the duel is taken, as it should be, with the greatest gravity, not at all as a mere convention of the costume novel. In "Balisand," too, the politics of federalism are not exhumed for the purposes of historical coloring, but because Mr. Hergesheimer is a genuine, perhaps the only living, Federalist.

And more than that: he is a dependable pro-slavery man. Contemplating one of the stories in "Quiet Cities," he writes:

> As I considered Natchez and Sylvester Dering and his momentary friend Damaris Vaun, I was conscious of a certain sympathy for the institution of slavery. It seemed to me to be neither inhuman nor inappropriate. I wasn't convinced of the existence of the brutalities asserted to belong to it by the different North.

He ends on that delicately philosophical note which really underlies everything he has written: "Most men, anyhow, were slaves." All this is no idle gesture on Mr. Hergesheimer's part; he is far too honest to indulge in mere rhetoric. There is a sentence in "From an Old House" (describing the delights of building a Colonial mansion and tastefully illustrated with photographs of Mr. Hergesheimer's bedrooms) which indicates that for him the Civil War was a trivial skirmish: *"Cypress shingles, cut by a crew of niggers in a Louisiana swamp, hand split and drawn. How was it possible for me to have any other?"* A statement that deserves to go down in history with Marie Antoinette's "Let them eat cake."

Mr. Hergesheimer is not the man to evade the logic of his own position. His finely phrased disdain for the generality of people leads him inevitably to the high worship of things. Among all the writers of our time he is the only one who may be said really to have put things in their proper place. And to his love of things we, his readers, owe our own insight into Mr. Hergesheimer's character. In "From an Old House" we follow his furniture-collecting career more and more breathlessly until at last we reach the almost unbearable triumphant climax: "I had what I was convinced was the only very early high-posted walnut bed in existence." A sentence like this is as revealing as anything in the "Confessions" of Rousseau.

Mr. Hergesheimer's high regard for beautiful things runs through every one of his books. Two of his most characteristic novels are, indeed, hardly concerned with people at all, except indirectly. One of them revolves about a doll (expensive); the other about an evening dress (from Paris). His ability to deal with the inanimate is so masterful that frequently the characters recede into complete banality as compared with the rooms they inhabit, the jewels they wear, the chairs they sit upon. Let us take a typical Hergesheimer passage:

> They were at lunch in the Feldt dining-room, an interior of heavy, ornately carved black wood, panels of Chinese embroidery in imperial yellow, and a neutral mauve carpet. The effect, with glittering iridescent pyramids of glass, massive frosted repoussé silver, burnished gold-plate, and a wide table decoration of orchids and fern, was tropical and intense.

After this description of the Feldt dining-room, who could care about the Feldts themselves? A banal sentence such as "Clara moved to the fireplace and looked at her watch" takes on warmth and meaning when translated into Hergesheimer:

> Clara moved at once to the fire burning in a small open fireplace set in an ornamental Georgian frame of imitation stone. She looked at the minute watch bound on her wrist by a band of platinum and diamonds.

Mr. Hergesheimer's technical resources have never received adequate tribute. He can arrange and serve a dinner with more aplomb than the suavest captain at the Colony. No one can do a better genre picture of an attractive lady slowly dismembering an artichoke; describe a hotel lobby with greater fire and enthusiasm; convey more precisely the interior of a hairdressing salon, each waver and wire rendered with the clarity of a Vermeer. His knowledge of women's underwear, exhibited modestly but firmly in a dozen books, is that of a trained connoisseur: some of his most admirable, if not most exciting, sentences deal with the delicacies of "insertions" and "foams of ribbon and lace." He is, in fact, a past master at dressing women.

Because he loves nice things it was perhaps natural that he should establish with George Horace Lorimer the *entente cordiale* which has helped to make the *Saturday Evening Post* what it is, in the opinion of many people, today. Let us remember that it is not enough to call attention to the best things in life. It is important to show that the best things in life are not free. This Mr. Hergesheimer's stories and novels do with unmatchable finesse and conviction. It is impossible to estimate how greatly the antique business was stimulated by his notable series of tales dealing with early American furniture. His characters toss off slogans which even Barron Collier would envy: *"The most expensive corsets are the cheapest in the end."* His descriptions of interiors are not merely aesthetic exercises, but, like good Communist literature, create the impulse to action, to purchase. "The ice was frozen into precisely the right size; and the cigars before him, a special Corona, the Shepheard's Hotel cigarettes, carried the luxury of comfort to its last perfection. Mrs. Grove smoked in an abstracted long-accustomed manner." Compared to the delicate lure of such phrases, the shrieking tobacco billboards are inefficient and behind the times.

Mr. Hergesheimer's novels show his mastery of one of

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the major principles of salesmanship—the appeal to the gentler but more prodigal sex. His most attractive heroines possess, as one of their dominant characteristics, the ability to make their men spend money on them. Young but ambitious Bailey Sandby, suing for the hand of the charming Vigné, says: "But of course I'm not going to be poor, not with Vigné. Nobody could. She'd inspire them." Again and again he creates, as in Linda Condon, women single-minded in their desire to give little and get much—and any advertising executive will tell you that this sound American upper-class female trait is responsible, to a very respectable degree, for keeping the wheels of industry turning. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation might do worse than devote a small subsidy to the exploitation of Mr. Hergesheimer's novels.

His women, of course, represent Mr. Hergesheimer's major claim to immortality. If his works are ever collected as a set, I should suggest as a general, if somewhat clumsy, title: "A Chronicle of the Omnipotence of Really Glamorous Women." For, when you get right down to it, his books *are* his women, enigmatic creatures always on the lookout for something beyond passion. (On the other hand, one must not forget the flaming insight which gave us the memorable cries of Savina Grove: "I want to be outraged!" and "I want to burn up with a red flower in my hair and not cool into stagnation.") Mr. Hergesheimer himself has uttered the last word on all his heroines, whether they be Manchu princesses or ladies-in-waiting from the English court:

> They were created delicate and charming, impracticable in cambric and chiffon, for my personal reassurance and pleasure. I wanted them that way and there they were. Later, when I met delightful women, I discovered a secret they shared with each other and with me: what I had always wanted them to be they wanted to be—delicate and charming in cambric and chiffon, tender and faithful and passionate.

To expect these creatures, impracticable in cambric and chiffon, to be subject to the emotions of ordinary women would be a social error of the most heinous variety. It is true that a sentence such as "Every little while a specially insinuating melody became apparently entangled in the women's breathing, and their breasts, cunningly traced and caressed in tulle, would be disturbed" would seem to indicate the contrary. Yet, one realizes at once that a single magical touch, the tulle, immediately lifts the scene above the level of ordinary sensuality into the more refined domain of lingerie.

We have mentioned previously the necessity Mr. Hergesheimer has been under, in his endeavor to depict an ideal aristocracy, of relying upon the past. Particularly of late he has shown a certain lack of confidence in the society he ornaments. This is not to be attributed to any lack of esprit de corps. With all Society's faults he loves it still. Yet his misgivings make for a kind of ambiguity in his approach to his material which lovers of his fine consistency will be the first to deplore. In "Cytherea," for example, he devotes four lapidary pages to the description of a fox hunt—and at the end the reader is troubled with some slight doubt as to the seriousness with which Mr. Hergesheimer takes this high ritual. The novel itself, it will be remembered, deals with the revolt of Lee Randon against the comforts of country-club life and the endearments of a good woman. For a moment it would seem that this revolt might be part and parcel of a deeper rebellion against what wild young radicals would call the System; but this is a superficial judgment. At bottom, it is clear, Lee Randon is fleeing his forty-seven years. His virility, urged into activity by the doll Cytherea, makes its last stand with Savina Grove. Together they float into a travel-bureau paradise of special compartments, luxury liners, Daiquiri cocktails, and gold stoppers. Still even this *voyage en Cythère* betrays a kind of failure of nerve, a hint that all is not right with the best people.

His latest book, "Tropical Winter," a super-epic of Palm Beach, serves to emphasize this impression. Here Hergesheimer turns Cassandra. The real Palm Beach aristocrats were stricken by the market crash and only the dross, the *nouveaux riches,* remain. The wealthy are faced with Æschylean tragedy (one poor lady is left with a mere $3,000 a year for life), and the only humor to be extracted from the whole deplorable situation lies in the amused contemplation of those vulgarians who either have not enough money really to get by or who, even if rich, cannot possibly know the ropes. In this saddening book Hergesheimer's chosen people have succumbed to boredom; some are even homicidal; all appear to be dipsomaniacs. These stories are Mr. Hergesheimer's contribution to the literature of the depression: meeting his artistic responsibilities nobly, he offers this ten-act Palm Beach tragedy as his reaction to the social crisis which confronts the world. His next book, he tells us, will follow the careers of these pitiable "new poor" in Biarritz, Nice, Monte Carlo, and St. Jean de Luz. Mr. Hergesheimer is fundamentally sound; he intends—and more power to him—to stick to the end and shame the rats by going down with the sinking ship.

Lest the reader imagine that his dissatisfaction with his colleagues conceals any growing revolutionary ardor, I append a short reassuring passage:

> It was appropriate for the young to be socialistic, since youth was in essence a splendid, if temporary, revolt; but I had passed that age; I wanted pleasantness and security . . . an occasional half-hour choosing neckties.

And there, engaged in the charming pursuit of selecting cravats, it seems, to use Mr. Hergesheimer's admirable word, "appropriate" for us to leave him.

Sonnet

By MARK VAN DOREN

I said: It will not blow this way again;
The branches of my life too soon are old;
The wind is kind to early-withered men
Lest they remember and confess the cold.
I said, and scarcely knew that it was I,
Hanging my leaves there in the springless year.
I said; and did not listen to a high,
Loud sound of March that filled the woods with fear.
Then it was all around me, till at last
Love like a hurricane of hate was blowing—
Bruising me everywhere. Yet I was fast,
And stood among the ruins of his going.
Only the after stillness came and showed
These blossoms on me everywhere, like blood.

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To the Queen of Heaven

By GENEVIEVE TAGGARD

(Athena speaks)

Maiden in love with Possibility,
Seducing from the Void, the Event,
Look, curiously virginal creature, look on me
On whom the void lies barren and frequent

Storms of small meaning pass and sadden; send
Some fate unique, locked in some bosom; make
Of nothingness a substance, Mother; lend
Me Thy archaic smile, the blind gaze of the bacchante
For my sake,
Amen.

Little Caesars

By HORACE GREGORY

And did you see his face:
the wide Augustan eye
that rivets stellar space?
Gaze deeply on this face
whose features never die
but are restored again
from bronze and curried stone:
nostril and broad cheek bone
carved out of memory—
the face of other men
whose swift mortality
discovers them again
engraved in bronze, in stone.
Put Charles the Bald in that corner of the museum:
the brain so light, the limbs so heavy
no horse could carry him;
and over there, Napoleon's son
whose eyes held midnight in two spheres,
the two lost kingdoms his.
Hail him, inheritor
of millions—
Was it men
or stocks or acres or . . .?
Count all his wealth again.
Intangibles of power are written in ticker tape
on private yachts: ring them up on the cash register,
cable them from Maine to Singapore
around the world tonight.
Remark the stallion eye
the white-lipped masonry,
the mouth endures beyond
brass-written monuments
where sleepless deserts lie.
And did you hear the name?
Each with a different name
but the anatomy,
limbs, torso quite the same;
the head erect, secure,
the face rolled toward the sky.

Books

Ludwig and Mussolini

Talks with Mussolini. By Emil Ludwig. Translated from the German by Eden and Cedar Paul. Little, Brown and Company. $2.75.

HAVING revealed the most intimate secrets of Goethe, Napoleon, Bismarck, William II, Schliemann, Lincoln, Frederick the Great, Leonardo da Vinci, Stanley, President Wilson, Lenin, and even Jesus Christ, thanks to the art of mental analysis, Emil Ludwig decided to perform the mental analysis of Mussolini. In eighteen cross-examinations Mussolini kindly consented to submit to this delicate operation.

Ludwig once again describes with religious fervor the famous hall, sixty feet long, forty feet wide, and forty feet high, where il Duce receives his visitors; the crossing of that ocean before reaching the harbor of the writing table; while beyond this historical table the Duce sits meditating profound thoughts. Near him on a high stand is an open atlas showing the map of Europe. Mussolini scrutinizes Ludwig with "his dark eyes which gleam like black satin in the half light," "thrusts forward his chin," raises his "beautiful" hands, "turns his chair," "knits his brows," "lays his arms on the table," "leans forward," "rests his chin on his hands," "sets his jaw," "pulls down the corners of his mouth," "the sound of his low-pitched voice recalls that of a distant gong"; and Ludwig takes notice of all these physical postures with the all-inclusive concentration of the little nun who receives the vision of her mystical spouse.

Mussolini explains how he organizes his days in order to take better advantage of his time—a problem which every sensible person solves in his own way; and Ludwig becomes enraptured: "You describe a Goethean technique." Mussolini modestly confesses to feeling "akin to Dante," because of his partisanship; and Ludwig trembles with delight: "You remind me of Bismarck." Mussolini says that he does not need an opposition because he creates an opposition within himself. President Hoover would say: "What a pity that it was not given to me to rid myself of Mr. Roosevelt, creating to my own liking my own internal opposition"; but Ludwig is carried away by a wave of enthusiasm: "I seem to be listening to Lord Byron." Mussolini wrote a description of his youth; and Ludwig, with a tremor of excitement up and down his spine, compares Mussolini to Trotzky. Mussolini explains how he prepares his speeches; and Ludwig immediately counteracts: "Lenin must have fashioned his speeches in much the same way." Mussolini expounds the principle—indeed, not a very original one—that "if one sets out from certain principles, one must not shrink from the logical consequences of these"; and Ludwig: "Your logic is Napoleonic and I have nothing to say against it." Ludwig speaks of Plato; Mussolini stretches his arm, and there are Plato's "Dialogues." Ludwig speaks of Caesar; Mussolini stretches his arm and presents to Ludwig a copy of Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar." "I have *just* been reading 'Julius Caesar' "; and Ludwig does not stop to think that on that very day he had had to wait for well over an hour before being received because Mussolini had a lengthy business meeting with a commission consisting of about thirty people: had he been reading Shakespeare's tragedy *just* while he was discussing business with those thirty people? Ludwig reads those verses by Goethe in which the centenarian Faust dreams of a new humanity, redeemed by the arts of peace and freedom—verses which everyone in Italy knows by heart since they are sung at the end of Boito's "Mephistopheles"—and Mussolini is "very much struck" by the parallelism which Ludwig establishes between Faust and Mussolini, and "slowly reads the German verses

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aloud." In a succeeding conversation, however, Mussolini asserts that he has thoroughly studied Goethe's works, "above all 'Faust' —both parts"; and Ludwig does not ask him how he happened to be so very much struck by those verses that he wanted to read them slowly and aloud, as if he had never known of their existence, when he had studied the "Faust" so thoroughly.

Blinded by his enthusiasm, Ludwig avoids every embarrassing question. Nay, more; he suggests—in the very act of questioning—the most appropriate answers: "When on your way to Rome, were you in the mood of an artist or that of a prophet?" "Artist," Mussolini is happy to answer. "I advocate movement," Mussolini says; and Ludwig: "Is your movement undulating, or is it, rather, like the ascent of the Alps?" "Climbing an Alp." Ludwig cannot help speaking at least once of Matteotti: "When all the power of the state is concentrated in the hands of one man, it may well happen that undesirable things take place *in spite of the autocrat's will*: don't you think that such things are more likely to happen in a dictatorship?" Thus Ludwig a priori solves the problem of whether the murder of Matteotti really occurred in spite of Mussolini's will, and Mussolini can triumphantly answer that "political crimes occur just as frequently in democratic states. You will remember a notorious instance under Napoleon III." Ludwig thinks of everything except of asking Mussolini whether the empire of Napoleon III was a democratic state, and whether it is common practice in democratic states for those who instigate a murder to be the most intimate collaborators of the Prime Minister and to receive from him a pardon without his being turned out. Mussolini subjugated Ludwig, made of him his propaganda agent, and tells us—through Ludwig—only what he wants us to believe.

GAETANO SALVEMINI

Gentleman Seeks Regeneration

The Coloured Dome. By Francis Stuart. The Macmillan Company. $2.

EXTRAORDINARY praise was given to Mr. Stuart's "Pigeon Irish" and is now being given to "The Coloured Dome." This is likely to prove embarrassing to him and perhaps injurious. In the first place, it will not help him with perceptive readers, who, having heard such phrases as "the most noteworthy example of Irish literature in twenty years," will be astonished to come upon a romance in the tradition of Stevenson that would be outweighed by the most hastily written tale by Liam O'Flaherty, to stop short of greater names. The plot of "The Coloured Dome" turns on the Shakespearean convention of disguise: Tulloolagh, the secret leader of the Irish Revolution, is in reality a woman; her troops and fellow-conspirators are fooled by her deep voice and derby hat. Another romantic revival is the prevalence of only the noblest motives: the street hawker would not think of taking money for his little boxes, he wants to give them away; the hero and heroine have but one wish, to die for their ideal as soon as possible. One does not have to be a grim realist to know that the story is absurd. Near the end an attempt is made to redeem it with satire and a religious idea; but the satire is painfully schoolboyish and the religious idea a naive steal from Dostoevski.

In the second place, the stupid praise given to Mr. Stuart may do him harm, because beneath his present deficiencies there are a warmth of heart, a liveliness of impression, a hunger of soul, which might lead him, if not hindered by nonsensical compliments, to develop considerably. The religious idea embraced at the end by his hero is that of self-immolation, of humbling himself among outcasts, of losing in order to find. Mr. Stuart himself is a young gentleman of Ulster-Unionist parentage and Rugby education who went to jail for fighting on the unrespectable side of the Irish Republicans. The autobiographical material is the most interesting part of his book; like his hero he seems to be seeking regeneration through identifying himself with the disesteemed and oppressed. His novel, however, remaining derivatively and thinly in the ether of ideas, is no more than a spiritual slumming party, a well-bred peek into the lower depths. For all his dissatisfactions and yearnings Mr. Stuart seems to continue to be a most unimpeachable gentleman. Whether he is to go farther in the realization of his wishes, both religious and artistic, will depend greatly on whether he listens to his admirers or his friends.

GERALD SYKES

Stanley and Africa

Bula Matari: Stanley, Conqueror of a Continent. By Jacob Wassermann. Translated from the German by Eden and Cedar Paul. Liveright. $3.

WASSERMANN wrote this biography with a good deal of self-consciousness. He reports long conversations in his preface, conversations to justify his project to his friends. It is a relief to turn to the matter of the book, which handsomely justifies itself. But the self-consciousness persists like an undertone, breaking out now and then into shrill "psychographic" demonstrations which mystify more than they explain.

In Wassermann's youth Stanley's explorations were the sensations of the Occidental world. Their glamor has survived in his memory with an insistence which, had he been an adventurer, he might have met by, let us say, a crossing of the Gobi Desert; but being a writer, he has met it by penning a book. Certainly Stanley is a hero worth the attention of any literary monument-builder. He was the first white man to traverse the interior of Africa, an explorer unmatched in courage, endurance, and sheer human effectiveness. Stanley was one of the men whom a cruel childhood prepared for a career of strenuous greatness. An illegitimate child, his first years were spent in a workhouse where the children were under the care of a sadist subsequently committed to an insane asylum. His experiences there developed his endurance but left him for the rest of his life shy and uncomfortable in society. The solitude of the African jungle, so mercilessly indifferent to human life, offered adjustments to a personality solitary among men.

After wanderings in his youth, during which he tasted all the brutalities visited upon the casual worker, he found himself serving aboard a Northern ship during the Civil War. Letters he wrote to a newspaper describing a naval battle were so well received that he entered with immediate success into journalism. His first African expedition—the search for the missionary Livingstone who had penetrated into the jungle and been unheard from for years—was a newspaper assignment given him by James Gordon Bennett. His second expedition was undertaken to complete the work of Livingstone, who had descended a river which he believed to be the head-stream of the Nile, but which Stanley proved to be the Congo. His third expedition, under the joint auspices of an American and an English newspaper, was organized to bring relief to Emin Pasha, an officer under Gordon, who had escaped with a small Egyptian army from the conquering Mahdists.

All these expeditions were spectacularly successful, and Stanley's own stamina and capacity may be measured by the tragedies of most of his subordinates, who died or, failing in their lesser tasks, became nervous wrecks. To his generation his achievements seemed incredible, and armchair geographers ridiculed him. When he had vindicated himself, doubt turned into the belief that he had succeeded only by inhuman treatment of his Negro carriers.

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No one could then foretell what the outcome of his explorations would be. Stanley had the naive nineteenth-century faith in civilization and progress. He thought himself a bearer of civilization, and went begging among the governments of Europe, trying to interest them in the development of the Congo region, sincerely believing that it would bring advantages to the native populations. Had he foreseen the vast and ghastly sweat-shop the land would become under the exploitation of that royal sharper Leopold of Belgium, he would have felt worse betrayed than by the libels that pursued him to the end of his days.

Except for the self-consciousness which I have mentioned, Wassermann's biography is vigorous, well proportioned, well paced—a very good piece of work. In trying to find almost occult stresses of personality in the meetings with Livingstone and Emin Pasha, and especially in trying to analyze the processes of a "poet of action" he strains his talents and the reader's attention. Action is best expressed in its own terms; and Wassermann could have made his effective book more effective by using the space given to psychological analysis for describing more of the incidents of the expeditions. ISIDOR SCHNEIDER

Too Early in the Morning?

The Years of the Locust (America, 1929-1932). By Gilbert Seldes. Little, Brown and Company. $3.

ONE gathers from the first chapter that the primary purpose of this volume is to discover the emotional ups and downs of a period which so far has been considered chiefly in financial and industrial terms. In pursuit of this idea the author has introduced a "fever chart." Taking the Standard Statistics Company's wriggly black line of stock prices from 1929 onward, he has superimposed a red line to record roughly the "psychological temperature" of the depression years. It is one of those whimsies which are delightful when tossed at a group of friends after the second cocktail but which rarely seem as realizable the next morning. Unfortunately, Mr. Seldes went ahead and realized it, and in spite of the flaming scarlet of his fever line, it is pallid, unsubstantial, and a trifle absurd beside the hard, sober finality of the black mark.

Probably the chart is not intended to be taken too seriously, and the book is not without discriminatingly gathered facts and thoughtful criticism, but the promise of the first chapter is not fulfilled. Mr. Seldes includes too much of the newspaper material of the past three years—material which a decade hence may be picturesque but just now seems merely a little stale—and too little on that most important question, the loss in moral and mental values which has been a distinguishing feature of the present depression as compared with others in America's history.

The author concludes that the intellectuals have suffered as much in prestige from the depression as have the capitalists. "Long separated one from the other, each fell for lack of support. It is remarkable that after the first six months or so, hardly an authoritative voice was spoken in defense of the capitalist system." But Mr. Seldes is impressed not so much by the fact that "a few excellent writers have become Communists" as by the fact that a great number have "begun to feel a certain insignificance in their work." It is "a kind of depression pessimism," founded on the theory that this is "no time for the parasitic activities of art." It had been a common —and lamented—belief that America had no past, Mr. Seldes continues, but no one questioned its future, "and there was something unmanly in the prompt enthusiasm with which we leaped overboard the moment the ship struck a reef. The capitalists and the intellectuals were both being highly romantic in the sense that neither was willing to contemplate things as they are."

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Maybe we have had so many histories lately in the manner made popular by Mark Sullivan that we are tiring of the method; maybe the author of this volume, finding himself sinking instead of swimming in an ocean of material, grabs the reader and pulls him down too; maybe it is too soon to attempt an interpretation of the depression. A history of the debacle published only three years after it began—and heaven knows how long before it may end—is like an evening newspaper on sale at 9 a. m. One surmises that at the end of the epoch—if there is a definite demarcation five, fifty, or one hundred years hence—not much importance will attach to the efforts of the ambitious Nimrods who got up at dawn in order to shoot the depression on the wing before breakfast.

ARTHUR WARNER

Australian Pioneering

Pageant. By G. B. Lancaster. The Century Company. $2.50.

THE subject of Miss Lancaster's "Pageant" has a great fascination for American readers, for the idea of pioneering is deeply fixed in the popular imagination as something highly romantic and adventurous. This is an entirely natural result of the persistent overstress placed upon these aspects of the process by writers of historical romances. On the other hand, a school of American critics has sought to impress exactly the opposite idea on its readers—the intellectual and emotional cost of pioneering. In either case there has been an exaggeration of a single aspect of the situation rather than any effort to recover a sense of actuality, of complexity, of contradictoriness. It is one of the outstanding merits of "Pageant" that all the elements of the pioneering era in Australia are present, and while Miss Lancaster has integrated her story around the fortunes of the "aristocracy" she has not failed to indicate the counterbalancing group which paid a heavy price for the success of the undertaking.

"Pageant" interests me far more in its sociological implications than as a work of fiction aesthetically considered. Australian fiction is usually most profitably approached from this angle, for the literature of the country has not yet become "literary"; it still retains a good deal of pristine vigor. "Pageant" tells the story of successive generations in Tasmania from the original pioneering representatives of a family that came out from England after the Peninsular War, down through the years of change, to the scattering of the younger people on the mainland, which became the theater of the great developments that we now associate with Australia. We find in its pages the main facts which distinguish the Australian story from that of pioneering in the United States.

We discover, that is, that there was no important conflict between the white invaders and the aboriginal population; that the story is not one of small proprietors, but of the immediate development of great sheep stations manned by convict labor; that underlying the pseudo-aristocracy which immediately developed was an oppressed class, the convicts, which supplied the needed labor power; that the conflict between the two classes issued in bushranging; and that the political history of the country is, roughly, a story of the struggle of the aristocracy for the right to rule themselves and escape the power of the military sent out to govern the convicts. We see the struggle to end the convict system when there came to be a dangerously large surplus of labor, and the gradual entrance into the picture of the trading class, the small farmer, and, by implication, the industrial workers who, in collaboration with the agricultural and pastoral laborers, form the basis of the present day Labor Party and give the country its tone. The history of Australia is a history which follows these steps—aristocracy, bourgeoisie,

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labor, with the second group the weakest of all. In America the cycle has been, roughly, small bourgeoisie, big bourgeoisie, and a large question mark to indicate the future.

"Pageant" is, I should not neglect to mention, a fascinating story and undoubtedly will interest more readers than my sociological summary would indicate. Placing it against the background of Australian literature, I should rank it with the work of Miles Franklin, Barnard Eldershaw, and Brent of Bin Bin. It is another well-wrought swan song for the aristocracy, or what the Australians call the squattocracy, but it is not the classic swan song. That is being written by Brent of Bin Bin and is slowly being published in England. All who read "Pageant" should be excellently prepared for Brent's tremendous chronicle.

C. HARTLEY GRATTAN

Tempests and Music

The Shakespearian Tempest. By G. Wilson Knight. Oxford University Press. $4.25.

THIS is the fourth volume which Mr. Knight has published about Shakespeare's symbols, and though it is neither the best nor the worst of the four it seems suddenly, while continuing to reveal the great critical virtue of Mr. Knight, to reveal also his cardinal defect.

His virtue—rare these days—is that he addresses himself solely to the consideration of Shakespeare as a great poet. Nothing else about Shakespeare even faintly interests him. Questions of source, authenticity, and technique are left quite out of an account which has only to do with the one question: How did Shakespeare's imagination work? In his new volume, as formerly in "Myth and Miracle," "The Wheel of Fire," and "The Imperial Theme," Mr. Knight answers the question by saying that Shakespeare's imagination worked in a marvelously consistent and at the same time copious way with a host of themes or symbols which may be reduced, and here are reduced, to two: tempests and music. The two are in reality one, since they express an opposition, and since Shakespeare is concerned from first to last with setting forth this opposition in divers terms. The histories and the early tragedies are swept by tempests of civil disorder through which only now and then sound the sweet notes of peace and music. The early and middle comedies are "plays in which tempests are but the condition through which are attained the dreamland melodies of romance." The great tragedies are entirely given over to "a minute analysis of disorder [tempest] in all its forms"; though "in these plays, too, against tempests sounds still the siren music of peace and love." Finally, in the romances Shakespeare abandons himself to pure image, which becomes the poem and makes the plot—most notably, of course, in "The Tempest" itself.

Mr. Knight writes so richly and passionately in defense of his thesis that one does not know how to stop him and ask him a question. Not that one has a question, perhaps, bearing directly upon the material which the thesis considers. No, Mr. Knight is quite clearly the master of that material; the imagery of Shakespeare is not likely ever to be studied to such good purpose again. But what if one wants to know whether Shakespeare can be understood in any other way? Mr. Knight's answer, given over and over in the preface to this book, is such a humorless and priestlike No that now at last the reader—hitherto hypnotized by Mr. Knight's eloquence and poetic learning—has the clue to his defect. His defect is that he believes he has none. For does he not present in these pages "the hitherto neglected Shakespearian essence"? Has he not the amazing privilege of pointing out, now in this year 1933, "the only final unity in Shakespeare"? Has he not a unique

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advantage over every other commentator—over him, for example, who explains the plays through their characters? To isolate a character distorts the play, says Mr. Knight; to isolate a symbol clarifies it. Which is another way of insisting that Mr. Knight is the only critic among all the ten thousand who holds or ever held the true key to Shakespeare. Which, fortunately or unfortunately, is nonsense.

MARK VAN DOREN

Mary Wollstonecraft

Mary Wollstonecraft. By H. R. James. Oxford University Press. $2.50.

THIS sketch of Mary Wollstonecraft, by a man well known in connection with the struggle for liberty in India, is a very excellent account of her mind and work. The unpretentiousness of the essay and its informality have the effect of putting her activities into relief, so that we get a clearer view of the astonishing social revolutionary she really was than we might get from a more accomplished work. Mr. James lays the emphasis on what she achieved and on the extent of her influence rather than on her complexes and drawbacks. The book, however, is in no sense a biography; the author never comes to terms with the personality of Mary, for he never quite comprehends her combination of quixotism and practicality, eighteenth-century devotion to abstractions and a Celtic impetuosity and combativeness, all centered in a very attractive and warm-hearted human being. There have been few belonging to that most slandered order, women of genius, who have been more thoroughly slandered than Mary Wollstonecraft. She presented to calumniators a personality that could be attacked front, flank, and rear. An independent and fearless thinker, she had scant respect for the sacred rights of property, for the British constitution, for the marriage laws, for hereditary rights and social distinctions. Her writings were so thoroughly alarming in her own day that it was probably only owing to the great personal charm of their author that they were ever published at all. For this early champion of the rights of women and the rights of the proletariat seems, from the accounts of those who knew her, to have fascinated everyone with whom she came in contact: she was handsome, she was high-spirited, she was warmly affectionate; in fact, to our cold-blooded age, all her friendships seem to have the intensity of love affairs, for she gave herself extravagantly—to her family, to her friends, to humanity, to her two lovers—the American adventurer, Imlay, and afterwards to that splendid revolutionary thinker, William Godwin, who, undiscerningly, is always spoken of in a niggling way, chiefly because, in default of an income or a patron or of regular royalties from a publisher, he had often to apply for loans.

Though Mary Wollstonecraft's best-known work is her "Vindication of the Rights of Women," which is generally regarded as having started the movement for the emancipation of women, she first became famous in her own day by the reply she made to Burke's "Reflections on the Revolution in France." This was her "Vindication of the Rights of Man," which has frequently been described as one of the most dashing political polemics in the language. She was aroused to furious indignation by that appalling passage of Burke's about the rights of property and the proper attitude of the bulk of people to property: "They must respect that property of which they cannot partake. They must labor to obtain what by labor can be obtained, and when they find, as they commonly do, the success disproportioned to the endeavor, they must be taught their consolation in the final proportion of eternal justice." "It is possible, sir," Mary wrote in her reply, "to render the poor happier in this world without depriving them of the consolation which

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you gratuitously grant them in the next." "In that sentence is latent by implication," writes the author of this essay, "all the legislation for social betterment of the nineteenth century and after." On the heels of this reply the slanders began. "Security of property!" she had said; "Behold, in a few words, the definition of English liberty!" And the sentence staggered everybody to whom any attack on the status quo was alarming; in addition, it seemed more than indecent for a woman to handle a famous statesman so harshly and with such high temper. However, Burke was a good fighter himself, and though he wielded the rapier more elegantly than Mary, and was, which she was not, master of a magnificent prose style, there is in their methods of attack and even in their mentality something akin which was, perhaps, due to the same racial inheritance—Mary was born of an Irish family in England. They both had a passion for liberty, though the liberty they fought for was of different brands—he, as was perhaps natural in a statesman, thought that liberty came out of order, while she had the more daring idea that order came out of liberty; they had the curious Celtic quality of being revolutionary and conservative at the same time; both were powerful pamphleteers. She has been snappishly referred to by anti-feminists as "a she-philosopher," but that is exactly what she was; Mary Wollstonecraft was, like Burke, a social and political philosopher, with the difference that whereas many of the great Edmund's ideas are now embalmed like flies in amber—the amber of his wonderful prose—Mary's have helped to make the modern world, and have provided rallying cries for present-day movements. He of course surpassed her on the speculative plane and was a great writer, which she was not; Saintsbury was right in leaving her out of his "History of English Literature." Whatever were his real reasons for doing so, Mary Wollstonecraft's contribution is not to literature or art, though Mr. James takes her seriously as a writer. It is to political and social reform, and it is only owing to the unorganized condition of literary history that she is described as a woman of letters. She was a constructive thinker, but she never really learned to write any more than Madame de Staël ever learned to write. She wrote hastily, in a state of high excitement, for the purpose of forming opinion, and her method of expression was effective enough for that. Like some of Burke's, her writing was of the pamphleteering order, but she was among the greatest of the pamphleteers. The business of a pamphleteer is to conduct a propaganda, to advance a cause, and advancing causes was Mary's work in life. The chief causes to which she devoted herself, human liberty in general and the emancipation of women in particular, though they have been greatly legislated about since her time, have not yet caught up with her conceptions.

She had a more human and a more workaday political philosophy than Burke's, for she had come to grips with life in a way that had never come within the experience of that Ciceronian statesman. She was a personality who was not limited to the round of experience that normally falls to women—the experience of sex, motherhood, and home—though she had all that, too: all classes of people were known to her; she earned her own living and helped to provide for her family; she nursed the sick and succored the poor; her travels, for that age, were extensive and included Portugal, France, and Scandinavia. She was in Paris during the revolutionary period and saw the king from her window as he went to his death in a hackney-coach surrounded by the National Guards. Burke polished his ideas about the French Revolution in his study, and always with due respect to that bulwark of the British constitution, the sacred rights of property. Mary's final ideas were painfully formed from emotions felt and observations made on the spot. Her instinct for obtaining a first-hand knowledge of events is shown in her letter to her publisher written from Paris, in which she says: "I labor so continuously to understand what I hear that I

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never go to bed without a headache, and my spirits are fatigued with endeavoring to form a just opinion of public affairs."

There were at the time many Americans in France, and she frequented their society. With one of them, Gilbert Imlay, a gentlemanly cad from New Jersey, she had the passionate love affair that was really her undoing, for it may be said that from the time she met him her useful life ended. The chapter in which Mr. James deals with her relationship to Imlay is the best and most extensively documented in the book. Mary entered into a union with Imlay with the firm belief in its seriousness and lastingness, for when it came to falling in love this wise and brilliant woman was as easily fooled as a village girl. After having made use of her in every way, including making her his business envoy to Sweden, where she had to look after his interests though in a miserable state of health after childbirth, he deserted her and her child under, for her, very tragic circumstances, and a whole sequence of tragic dramas ensued. She attempted suicide and was barely saved by a rescue from the Thames, her physique badly damaged; her daughter, Fanny Imlay, later, actually ended her life by suicide. The elopement with Shelley of her second daughter, Mary Godwin, brought about the suicide of Harriet Westbrook, the poet's first wife. But after the intensity of the distress caused by Imlay's desertion it is a trifle startling to find her sufficiently recovered emotionally to marry William Godwin two years later, a union legalized before the birth of their daughter, which event cost her life, for Mary Wollstonecraft, like Charlotte Brontë, died in childbirth. As the Brontës brought a dash of Celtic intensity and untamedness into English literature, she brought the same intensity, the same untamedness into political and social affairs. She was a revolutionary, not in the plain and sane English way, but with the impetuosity, the *saeva indignatio,* and the personal passion of the Celt, and it is these qualities in her which, in spite of his fervent admiration for her, make her seem a little indecorous to Mr. H. R. James.

MARY M. COLUM

Violence and Reform

Moral Man and Immoral Society. By Reinhold Niebuhr. Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.

ACCEPTING the thesis, curious in a Union Theological Seminary teacher, that violence per se is not necessarily immoral provided it leads to a greater measure of justice in the world, Mr. Niebuhr traces the implications of his assumption by an appeal to history. Certainly he proves conclusively that the privileged classes, which are the ones to discountenance violence as a matter of dogma as long as they are in control of the state, have never hesitated to use force in the maintenance of their power, even when a menace has not taken the form of armed revolt. Mr. Niebuhr comes to a final distinction: that violence is not justified in the guise of imperialist war, but may be resorted to by oppressed minorities and by the disinherited of the class struggle if peaceful suasion notoriously fails to work. It comes a little hard for Mr. Niebuhr to admit that the end sometimes justifies the means; the time for violence he leaves to the conscience and intelligence of revolutionary strategists, hoping that reason will serve to temper any necessary struggle.

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JOHN CHAMBERLAIN

Films

The American Homeland

WHEN the archaeologist of the future begins his task of reconstructing the physical background of American life in the early twentieth century—the streets, the houses, the garages for two cars—he will have at least one advantage over his predecessors. Unlike the Egyptologist with his tattered bundle of hieroglyphic papyri or the Hellenist with his "two gross of broken statues," the student of our Middle American period will have at his disposal a whole library of flyblown celluloid which will need only to be exposed to the light to unfold, like Proust's madeleine, the whole rich, variegated, and preposterous life of our time. These long rolls of preserved sights and sounds, whether or not they will afford the entertainment for which they were once intended, will provide a vision of the past more complete than any procession of dancing figures on a vase, more vivid than any fragment of song or story, more articulated than any handful of bones on a hillside. So much, theoretically, would seem to be the great boon for posterity made possible by the cinema.

The only difficulty is that the twentieth-century American himself, in watching these same rolls unfold, is all too often at a loss to relate the backgrounds represented on them with any particular background of his acquaintance. If he is a New Yorker, for example, he is likely to be disturbed by the unmistakable vision of a palm-tree in the front yard of some Fifth Avenue mansion. The old New England farm of the pictures rarely resembles the real thing: the mountains are too high to be the Berkshires and there is a suggestion of cactus in the distance. Who is there that can fix the exact point in space occupied by the ironic parables of Charlie Chaplin? The city, the street, the house, the lamp-post—these have no local habitation and name. They are everywhere and nowhere. They are the mere abstractions of places and things. And they are recognizable only in so far as they are somehow profoundly typical of our life and time. It may be that this quality of abstractness in most Hollywood pictures is the result of an inept grafting of stories with different settings on the uniform California landscape. Or it may be, as it probably is in the Chaplin films, the result of a conscious stylization of material. But the fact remains that so far there has been in the films very little of that particularization of background which has been the main tendency in American fiction in recent years.

The most important thing about "State Fair" at the Radio City Music Hall is that it marks a possible tendency of the same sort in the films. Not since Wallace Beery's "The Champ" has any American picture striven so hard for a feeling of place. The choice of Phil Stong's novel was of course an excellent one for the purpose. Certainly nothing offers a better opportunity for the localization of distinctive American types, situations, and *mores* than a Middle Western state fair. There is a stretch in which we follow a typical American family riding at night along the corn fields, which has something of the beauty we admire in Russian films. Another group of shots of typical American faces at the fair gives us a notion of what may be done in this line as soon as our directors become more objective toward their material. Unfortunately, the presence of Janet

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Gaynor in the cast infuses just enough of the Pickford tradition into the picture to cancel some of its best effects and prevent it from being as good as it should be.

"Whistling in the Dark" at the Capitol is an effective comedy-thriller which owes rather too much to the straight legitimate technique of Ernest Truex. The scenes between this comedian and Una Merkel would be good on stage or screen; and this is of course equivalent to saying that the picture contributes nothing to the advancement of its own medium.

WILLIAM TROY

Drama

What This Country Needs

IT is obvious enough by now that the theatergoing public of New York does not want what by logic it should. Certain popular economists may have ridden to wealth on the crest of the depression, and pamphlets on technocracy may have saved the book trade from imminent collapse. But so far at least, the theater has made no profits out of protests or plans. Doubtless audiences have undergone their reverses and read their books, but the result of their suffering and their meditations was, apparently, only a growing conviction that what this country really needed was a play by Noel Coward, written for himself and the Lunts. In any event, that play had hardly been announced before a suppressed excitement began to make itself felt, and before the curtain rose on the first performance success was taken for granted. It made no difference that the box-office price was $4.40 a seat, or that practically all the tickets had mysteriously made their way from the box-office to those agencies which cannot be expected to resell except at a profit. An enthusiastic public considered itself lucky to get them at any price, and during the coming months it is generally expected that a definite class distinction will be drawn between those who have and those who have not seen "Design for Living" at the Ethel Barrymore Theater. The ghosts of several Barrymore heroines must shudder nightly as Messrs. Coward and Lunt descend the modernistic stairway of a pent-house apartment in pajamas which do not fit them for the very good reason that they belong to the husband of the lady who returns in satisfactory fashion the ardent and unplatonic affection of both of them.

I must, however, not forget to say that the evening provided is really amusing in an inconsequential and rowdy way. This time, to be sure, the play is decidedly not the thing and, indeed, I am inclined to suspect that even its "sophisticated" audience would be a little bit shocked if it were allowed to realize just what is going forward. We have got used to the triangle composed of two women and one man. It has been contemplated from all possible angles and treated alternately as deplorable, sentimental, and amusing. But for some reason or other we have shied off from the other triangle composed of two men and a woman. Quite irrationally, no doubt, the general feeling still persists that though a gentleman may divide his affections for an indefinite time, a lady who doesn't choose, at least after reasonable experiment, just isn't a lady. In sentimental romance "reasonable experiment" means only adequate attention to the claims put forward by her suitors. In more sophisticated tales it may include certain additional activities of a less completely symbolic kind. But in any event, choose she must. And yet it is exactly the necessity for choice which the heroine of Mr. Coward's play is original enough to deny. Such scruples as there are come from the male side, and the funniest moment of the piece is that in which Mr. Lunt,

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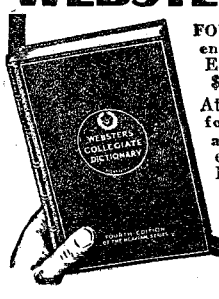

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somewhat alarmed at the consequences of his rationality, exclaims: "What we need is some standards, something to hold on to"—and then looks wildly about as he realizes quite clearly that none of them have any. But the lady is less disturbed. After betraying the first man with the second and then betraying the second man with the first, she comes to the sensible conclusion that there is no use continuing that indefinitely, and so the design for living has been worked out at last when the final curtain descends upon the three of them rolling around together on a couch—obviously prepared for what has previously been described as "a nice, spontaneous little tumble in the hay."

It is not wit which persuades the audience to accept this unconventional conclusion. The play is, indeed, rather deficient in bright lines, and the pleasure which it gives is due rather to the general high spirits of the playing than to anything inherent in the text itself. What really counts is that New York has taken the Lunts to its bosom. It is ready to meet them rather more than halfway, and the effect is visible in their own playing. They romp around the stage in the full knowledge that a crowded house is ready to admire them, and that knowledge gives them a gaiety almost irresistible. "Design for Living" is hardly to be judged as a play; it is a festival for all concerned, and it warms the heart as any success not obviously undeserved is almost sure to do. Audiences come, I suspect, partly because they are happy to contribute to some enterprise which is booming along with a good nineteen-twenty-nine sort of boom; and the success of this play was predestined by the stars—in more senses than one.

"Bad Manners" (The Playhouse) contains a great deal of talk about sex. It is smart comedy which is not quite smart enough, with a serious undertone which is not quite serious enough. The heroine says things like "You have a creative mind and that is the only sort I really respect."

JOSEPH WOOD KRUTCH

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